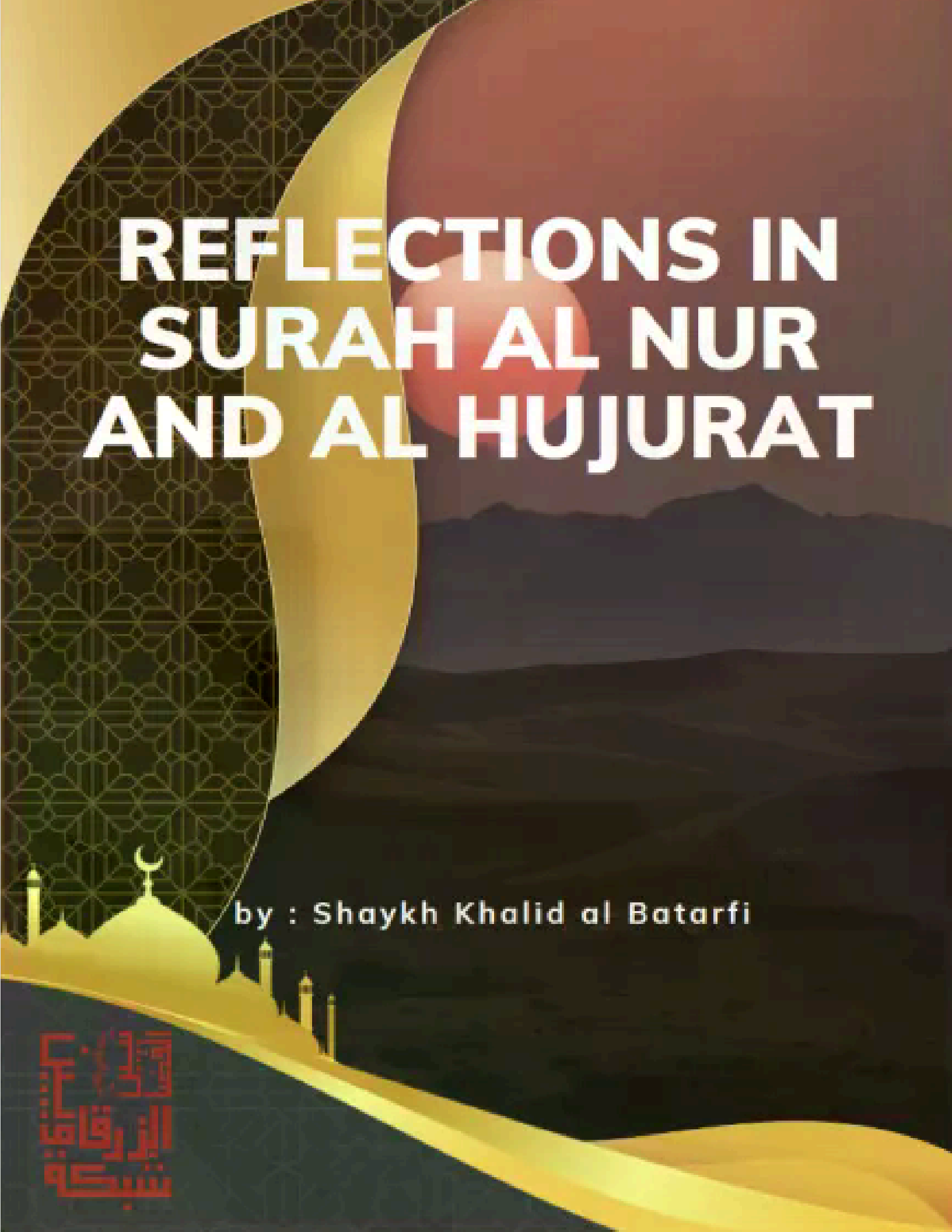
REFLECTIONS IN SURAH AL NUR AND AL HUJURAT
by : Shaykh Khalid al Batarfi

النور والحجرات

Reflections

in Surahs

AN-NUR & AL-HUJURAT

Light, Character, and Divine Guidance

Khaled Batarfi
(May Allah accept him)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Reflections in Surah al Nur and al Hujurat

by Shaykh Khaled Batarfi

(May Allah accept him and grant him Jannat-ul-Firdaus)
translated by Abou Baraq, full release on the night of Shawwal 1, 1447 In sha Allah

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ ۚ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِندِ غَيْرِ ٱللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا۟ فِيهِ ٱخْتِلَٰفًا كَثِيرًا

Do they not then reflect on the Quran? Had it been from anyone other than Allah, they would have certainly found in it many inconsistencies (Al Nisaa 82)

Sector 1: Surah al Nur

The Introduction to the dawah series:

Indeed, all praise belongs to Allah. We praise Him, we seek His aid, and we seek His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evils of our own souls and from the wickedness of our deeds. Whomever Allah guides, no one can lead astray, and whomever He leads astray, no one can guide. We bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah. He is One, and has no partner. And we bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger. He conveyed the Message, fulfilled the trust, offered sincere counsel to the Ummah, and through him, Allah dispelled the gloom. He left us upon a clear, lit up path. Its night is as bright as its day from which no one deviates except one who is doomed to destruction. He strove in the path of Allah with the utmost sincerity and effort, until certainty (death) came to him. May Allah reward him with the very best reward ever bestowed upon a Prophet on behalf of his Ummah. Now then: In this series of lessons, we will reflect upon two specific Surahs: Al-Nur (The Light) and Al-Hujurat (The Private Chambers). The reason we have chosen these two particular Surahs is that they are among those chapters most replete with divine guidance, codes of conduct ie. Adab, and educational principles specifically regarding how a Muslim should conduct himself amidst various events, tribulations, and trials. Furthermore, they serve as warnings against many actions that are not befitting for a believer and it detracts from the perfection of his faith or places him among the dissenters. Furthermore, these two Surahs contain glad tidings specifically, the promise of empowerment and security for the believers. This, too, is among the reasons we selected these two Surahs or rather, why our lessons will focus on them. These Surahs resonate with our current reality and address many of the events we are witnessing in this era. They offer solutions, provide spiritual instruction, and furnish guidance thus, we ask Allah the Almighty to grant us success in this endeavor. The objective of our lessons is to elevate the believer toward the loftiest of matters and the noblest of character, and to guide him in understanding how to apply Islamic jurisprudence, i.e., Fiqh, to the ever-changing events and situations of life. Key Themes: The Light of Faith (Nur al-Iman), the Etiquette of the Home, the Etiquette of Social Interaction, and Minor Etiquettes. Surah An-Nur opens with the Almighty's declaration: "This is a sûrah which We have revealed and made its rulings obligatory, and revealed in it clear commandments so that you may be mindful."

(Al-Nur: 1). Thus, Allah, Glory be to Him, begins this Surah by defining its status and elucidating its contents, specifically, the teachings and clear verses contained therein, so that we may take heed and reflect upon them. This Surah is the Surah of etiquette, moral character, and purposeful Islamic upbringing. It focuses on the ethics and values that emanate from a believer's faith in Allah. For when the light of faith enters the heart, the chest expands to accommodate it, and the soul finds solace and serenity within it. Sayyid Qutb (may Allah have mercy on him) observed: "This is a Surah in which 'Light' is mentioned, the Light of Allah, and in which are expounded its manifestations within the hearts of believers." "...and the souls" these verses serve as exemplars of the proper etiquette and moral character upon which a believer's life is established. "It illuminates life and connects it to that all-encompassing cosmic light—a light within the souls, a radiance within the hearts, and a transparency within the consciences, all derived from that Great Light." End quote. Thus is Surah Al-Nur, containing within it verses that elucidate the etiquette and moral virtues with which a believer ought to adorn themselves across various circumstances and situations. As for Surah Al-Hujurat, our Lord, Glory be to Him, commenced it with the words: "O you who have believed, do not put yourselves before Allah and His Messenger, and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing." (Al-Hujurat: 1). Al-Firuzabadi may Allah have mercy on him stated: "The primary objectives of Surah Al-Hujurat are as follows: Upholding the commands of the Truth (Allah) the Exalted, Deliberation in one's affairs and the avoidance of recklessness, And rendering aid to the oppressed ...by virtue of lineage and ancestry, and by refraining from presuming to confer a favor upon Allah through one's obedience." God willing and by His permission we shall pause to examine these verses in detail, offering our reflections upon them. We ask Allah to grant benefit through this work. Dr. Wasim Fathallah likewise observes regarding Surah Al-Hujurat: "Indeed, anyone who contemplates the content of this Surah will find that it addresses numerous guidelines and codes of conduct governing the functioning of the Islamic society thereby ensuring its discipline and its submission to the authority of this magnificent religion and will find that it elevates both the Islamic society and its individual members to lofty moral horizons." End quote. All that shall be mentioned in our reflections on these two Surahs may be summarized as pertaining to the noble virtues of character. AAnd people vary in their grasp of it, namely, the understanding of the religion and the various levels of religious comprehension among people. There are hadiths from the Messenger

of God (peace be upon him) that encourage these two things: noble character and understanding of religion. On the authority of Abu al-Darda’ (may God be pleased with him), on the authority of the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said: “There is nothing heavier in the scales than good character.” The heaviest thing in the scales is good character. The heaviest thing that will be placed in the scale is good character. When a believing person adorns himself with virtuous character, his scale on the Day of Resurrection, when the scale is set up before all of creation, will be the heaviest of all scales. It is also narrated on the authority of Abdullah ibn Amr (may Allah be pleased with them both) that he said: The Prophet (peace be upon him) was never vulgar, nor did he ever behave in a vulgar manner. He used to say: "The best among you are those with the finest character." The best of the believers, the best of the Muslims, are those who possess good character. Furthermore, it is narrated on the authority of Amr ibn Shu'ayb from his father, from his grandfather that he heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say: "Shall I not inform you of the one among you who is most beloved to me, and who will be seated closest to me on the Day of Resurrection?" Most beloved to whom? To the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); and the one closest to him in rank and proximity on the Day of Resurrection. "Who is this, O Messenger of Allah?" She complained about the maidservants, so he returned them to her. Al-Qa'qa' said: "By Allah..." "...the best of you in character." Thus, the person with the finest character is the one most beloved to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and the one who will be seated closest to him on the Day of Resurrection. We ask Allah to make us among those of excellent character, so that we may be among the beloved of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). On the authority of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "I have been sent only to perfect good character." The Prophet (peace be upon him) was sent to perfect noble morals and virtuous character. For this reason, we find that certain praiseworthy traits which existed among the polytheists during the pre- Islamic era ie. Jahiliyyah were affirmed and upheld by Islam. Examples include generosity, courage, fulfilling one's covenants, and other such virtues. As for the subject of deep understanding Fiqh in the religion: Yazid ibn al-Asamm narrated: "I heard Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan (may Allah be pleased with them both) mention a Hadith he narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him) a Hadith I had never heard him narrate from the Prophet (peace be upon him) from his pulpit on any other occasion. He said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be

upon him) said: 'Whomever Allah intends good for, He grants him deep understanding of religion. And there shall remain a group ie. Ta'ifah of Muslims fighting for the Truth, prevailing over those who oppose them, until the Day of Resurrection.'" This Hadith is recorded in Al-Bukhari. Let us reflect upon the significance of this Hadith specifically, the connection between deep understanding Fiqh in the religion and striving Jihad in the path of Allah with insight and upon the Truth. Thus, if we desire to undertake Jihad in the path of Allah, a Jihad grounded in insight and leading us to the noble objectives for which it is ordained, then it is imperative that we acquire a deep understanding of Fiqh of the religion. As for the fighter who lacks this religious understanding who engages in Jihad or combat without proper insight and out of ignorance he may, one day, unwittingly become a highway robber without even realizing it. He may commit acts that he mistakenly believes serve the best interests of Islam and the cause of Jihad, all without realizing the truth. But is he excused for this? No, he is not excused. Why? Because he failed to acquire a proper understanding of the religion. Furthermore, there is an indication in the Prophetic Tradition regarding the superiority of the one who possesses religious understanding over the one who does not, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stated: "If Allah intends good for a person, He grants him a deep understanding of the religion." Thus, deep understanding of the religion is a grace from Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, which He bestows upon whom He wills. We ask Allah to grant us of His bounty. Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) commented on the Almighty's verse: "Be you Rabbaniyyin [Godly scholars/teachers]" (3:79), explaining that this refers to "scholars who are jurists." It is also said that a Rabbani is one who nurtures people in their learning, beginning with the foundational, elementary aspects of knowledge before advancing to the more complex, advanced ones. We therefore ask Allah the Magnificent, Lord of the Magnificent Throne, to grant us a deep understanding of the religion, to bestow upon us excellent character, and to make us among those servants of Allah who listen to speech and follow the very best of it. Indeed, He has the power to do all things and is most worthy of granting our supplications. And the conclusion of our supplication is: All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

Lesson Two:

Praise be to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, his companions, and those who follow him. As for what follows: this is the first lesson in our series of reflections on Surahs An-Nur and Al-Hujurat. We begin with the Almighty's statement: "Indeed, those who came up with that ˹outrageous˺ slander are a group of you. Do not think this is bad for you. Rather, it is good for you.1 They will be punished, each according to their share of the sin. As for their mastermind,2 he will suffer a tremendous punishment.." (An-Nur: 11). What we wish to reflect upon in this verse is the specific portion of the Almighty's statement: "Do not consider it bad for you; rather, it is good for you." This verse was revealed in connection with the "Incident of the Slander" (Hadithat al-Ifk), which occurred during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It took place when the hypocrites cast aspersions upon the honor of the Prophet specifically regarding the Mother of the Believers, Aisha and regarding the noble Companion, Safwan ibn al- Mu'attal. Consequently, divine revelation was withheld for a full month. During that entire period, no revelation descended upon the Messenger of Allah concerning this matter. And the city was shaken with a shaking such as it had never experienced before. These criminals plunged into slandering the honor of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him)and that of the daughter of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq. The matter became so grave that even some sincere believers fell into speaking ill regarding this affair. Yet, despite this, Allah Glory be to Him declares: "(Do not think this is bad for you. Rather, it is good for you"). Abu Bakr ibn al-Arabi (may Allah have mercy on him) states: "The true nature of evil is that its harm outweighs its benefit. Thus, that which is pure good, containing no evil whatsoever, is Paradise. And that which is pure evil, containing no good whatsoever, is Hellfire. For this reason, the tribulation that befalls the Awliya (beloved servants of Allah) becomes a good thing, for the harm it causes in terms of worldly pain is slight, whereas its benefit, in terms of divine reward, is immense in the Hereafter." End quote. Al-Qushaybi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Allah Glory be to Him has made it clear that He leaves no one exempt from trials and tribulations regarding their love for Him and their loyalty to His cause. Indeed, such testing constitutes one of the strongest pillars of faith, its greatest proof, and its most truthful manifestation. As He stated: 'A man is tested according to the strength of his faith.' And He also said: 'Those who face the severest tribulations are the Prophets, followed by the next best, and then the

next best.'" End quote. Therefore, my beloved in Allah, whatever befalls the believers whatever tribulations afflict believers is, in reality, a good thing. This privilege is granted to no one other than the believer specifically, the righteous believer just as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "How wondrous is the affair of the believer! His entire affair is good. If he is blessed with prosperity, he gives thanks, and that is good for him; and if he is afflicted with adversity, he endures with patience, and that is good for him. This distinction belongs to no one but the believer." Thus, the believer alone is the one for whom tribulation even that which appears outwardly to be evil ultimately proves to be a good thing. Allah may ordain for us certain tribulations and trials, yet they turn out to be beneficial for us. Indeed, Allah may even ordain and impose upon us certain acts of worship that are arduous for the soul acts in which people might mistakenly perceive... It may appear to be an evil visited upon them; yet, within it lies immense good for the Muslims and the believers. In this regard, Allah Glory be to Him, the Exalted says: "Fighting has been enjoined upon you, though it is hateful to you. And it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you; and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you. And Allah knows, while you know not." (Al-Baqarah: 216) . Jihad in the path of Allah is something regarding which many who do not grasp the true reality of this matter mistakenly assume that it is inherently evil and detestable. Yet, they fail to realize that therein lies life for this religion, and indeed, life for humanity itself. For Allah Glorified and Exalted be He has said: "Respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life." (Al-Anfal: 24). Thus, in Jihad lies life. As Ibn al-Qayyim al- Jawziyyah (may Allah have mercy on him) stated: "Jihad in the path of Allah, and this is the essence of his words, (may Allah have mercy on him) is a source of life for this Ummah in this world, through its triumph over its enemies; it is a source of life for them in the Barzakh (the intermediate realm), where they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision; and it is a source of life for them in the Hereafter, through the enduring and everlasting bliss of Paradise, by the permission of Allah." Thus, it is never truly evil; rather, it is inherently good. Furthermore, trials or tribulations even those befalling Muslims are never purely evil in nature. However, it is incumbent upon a Muslim to adhere strictly to the Shari'ah during times of tribulation and testing; he must fulfill the commands enjoined by Allah and His Messenger, and abstain from the prohibitions forbidden by Allah and His Messenger. Moreover, let everyone realize that this matter, namely, exercising

patience regarding the afflictions and events that befall a believer, is fundamentally linked to the creed of believing in Divine Decree (Qadar), both its good and its evil. We know that belief in Divine Decree, in both its good and its evil aspects, constitutes one of the pillars of faith. People vary in their capacity for this; some submit to and are content with everything that befalls them, and such a person possesses strong faith, while others fall short of this standard. Indeed, the weaker one's faith becomes, the weaker becomes one's belief in Divine Decree, in both its good and its evil. Let us also recognize that the occurrence of trials and hardships for a Muslim yields certain benefits; among these benefits is the distinction between the truthful and the liar. Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, says: "Do people think that they will be left to say, 'We believe,' and will not be tested? We certainly tested those before them. And ˹in this way˺ Allah will clearly distinguish between those who are truthful and those who are liars." (Al-Ankabut: 2-3). Indeed, in times of tribulation lies the distinction between the truthful and the liar, furthermore, the true believer is distinguished from the hypocrite. Allah Glorified and Exalted be He says: "And among mankind is he who says, 'We have believed in Allah', but when he is harmed for the sake of Allah, he takes the trial of people as if it were the punishment of Allah. And if victory comes from your Lord, they will surely say, 'Indeed, we were with you.' Is not Allah most knowing of what is within the breasts of the worlds? And Allah will surely make evident those who believe, and He will surely make evident the hypocrites." (Al-Ankabut: 10–11). Another benefit (of tribulation) is the manifestation of the virtue of Allah’s truthful servants. An example of this is Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him): when the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed away, and the Arabs apostatized triggering a seismic upheaval unlike any seen before in that era this towering mountain of a man stood firm in the face of this fitnah. His virtue became evident through his steadfast stand against this sedition and his nipping it in the bud. The Caliphate of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq lasted only two years, yet, within that time, he accomplished what many others failed to achieve over the course of many years. He fought the apostates, quelled this sedition, and initiated the Islamic conquests, he re- established the foundations of Islam, a journey which the Companions subsequently continued after him. Another such example is Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) during the Fitnah of the Creation of the Quran. Observe how he stood firm (may Allah have mercy on him) throughout this tribulation until its true nature was exposed. Consequently,

Islam endured, and the Quran remained exactly as the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had brought it. Indeed, scholars state: "There are two stances in the history of Islam, were it not for which, Islam would have reached us in an incomplete state: the stance of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq during the Wars of Apostasy, and the stance of Imam Ahmad during the Fitnah of the Creation of the Quran." Furthermore, following in their footsteps came Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah may Allah have mercy on him who stood firm during the tribulation of the Tatars and their alteration of Allah's Law. There were many others besides them whose renown Allah elevated and whose virtues He made manifest in this life. Among the benefits derived is the exposure of the people of hypocrisy and corruption, and the elucidation of their wickedness and harmful nature. As was demonstrated in the Hadithat al-Ifk (the Incident of the Slander), Allah Glory be to Him revealed the virtues of the righteous while exposing the criminality of those transgressors. He showed how, in their baseness and depravity, they went so far as to target the very Household of Prophethood. Another benefit is the clear distinction drawn between the Believing scholars and their followers and the scholars of evil and caprice, and their followers. These are indeed immense benefits, we have not attempted to enumerate all the benefits contained therein, but have merely presented a selection. For if a person were to reflect upon every tribulation and calamity that befalls this Umma, he would discover a multitude of benefits, outcomes that ultimately redound to the advantage of the Muslims and result in great good for them. I ask Allah the Magnificent, Lord of the Great Throne, to grant us success in doing what He loves and is pleased with, to ease our affairs, and to make us among those who remain content with Allah's decree and destiny in all circumstances. Our final prayer is: All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

Lesson Three:

Praise be to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, upon his family, his companions, and all who follow him. O Allah, there is nothing easy except that which You have made easy, and You make the difficult easy if You so will. In this lesson of ours, we shall speak about, and reflect upon, the statement of Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He: "If only the believing men and women had thought well of one another, when you heard this ˹rumour˺, and said, “This is clearly ˹an outrageous˺ slander!" (An-Nur: 12). Similar to this is the verse in Surah Al-Hujurat: "O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah, indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" (12). We will address this verse in Surah Al-Hujurat by the permission of Allah the Exalted in due course, we have mentioned it here because it bears a resemblance (to the previous verse). Al-Baghawi may Allah have mercy on him stated: "Regarding His statement, Mighty and Majestic is He: 'Why... when you heard it, did the believing men and believing women not think good of one another' this means, they should have thought good of their brothers. Al- Hasan said: 'They should have thought good of the people of their own faith, for the believers are like a single soul.'" End quote. Al-Saadi may Allah have mercy on him stated: "This means that the believers harbored good thoughts about one another, specifically, the presumption of innocence, regarding the accusations leveled against them. They reasoned that the evident faith they possessed served to refute the slanderous falsehoods uttered against them.". The fundamental principle is to assume the best of a believer and to absolve him of any accusation. Thus, if an accusation is leveled against any believer, one whose outward conduct demonstrates faith, the default stance is to reject that accusation. Indeed, in this verse, Allah Glory be to Him praised the conduct of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari and his wife when the People of the Slander (Ahl al-Ifk) spoke ill of the Mother of the Believers, Aisha, and the noble Companion, Safwan ibn al- Mu'attal. When these rumors reached the ears of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari and his wife, he asked her: "O Mother of Ayyub, would you ever commit such an act?" She replied: "No, by Allah!" He said: "Then Aisha is better than you. And do you imagine that I would ever commit such an act?" She replied: "No, by Allah!" He said: "Then Safwan ibn al-Mu'attal is better than I am. This is a manifest slander!" Consequently, Allah Glory be to Him revealed this verse to confirm and endorse the words of Abu Ayyub. The underlying

principle is that if an accusation is leveled against a believer's fellow believer, he must reject it and refute it. Furthermore, it is a duty if a Muslim observes a fault in his fellow Muslim to offer him counsel and conceal his fault. This is the fundamental principle at the outset: to offer counsel and to conceal the fault. This is in accordance with the Prophet’s (Peace be upon him) statement: "Whoever conceals (the faults of) his Muslim brother, Allah will conceal his faults on the Day of Resurrection. And whoever exposes the faults of his Muslim brother, Allah will expose his faults, even to the point of disgracing him within his own home." He also stated: "Whoever conceals (the faults of) a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults in this world and the Hereafter." And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "No servant conceals (the faults of) another servant in this world without Allah concealing his faults on the Day of Resurrection." Taking them by the hand (to restrain them). This also applies to the demoralizer, the alarmist, and the corruptor, those who do not cease their acts of demoralization, alarm-mongering, and corruption even after being counseled and having the gravity of their actions clarified to them. Thus, if we encounter a demoralizer, an alarmist, or a corruptor, the fundamental principle is to offer them counsel at the outset. However, if they do not desist from such conduct, then it becomes imperative to take a firm stand against them; as for the corruptor, it is mandatory to enforce Allah’s prescribed penalty Hadd upon him. Furthermore, if an accusation is leveled against a believer, and there exists corroborating evidence Bayyinah, then, and only then, must action be taken. This principle is underscored by the following verse: "Why did they not produce four witnesses (to support their claim)? Since they did not produce the witnesses, then in the sight of Allah, it is they who are the liars." (Surah An-Nur: 13) Thus, the requirement for corroborating evidence is absolute. Naturally, the specific requirement of four witnesses applies in cases involving adultery Zina. In cases other than adultery, the requirement varies depending on the circumstances: sometimes the testimony of two witnesses suffices, at other times, three witnesses may be required, or perhaps the testimony of a single witness combined with an oath Yamin is deemed sufficient; or even circumstantial evidence Qara'in that rises to the level of definitive proof may suffice, and so on. The crucial point is this: it is absolutely impermissible for a Muslim to accuse his fellow Muslim brother of any wrongdoing without clear, corroborating evidence. This constitutes the prescribed Islamic guidance for such situations. Moreover, one must exercise extreme caution regarding anyone who conveys information or rumors without

substantiation; such an individual may well be either a demoralizer or an infiltrator, specifically, a hypocritical infiltrator, much like the hypocrites who disseminated the slander Al-Ifk among the Muslims during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), targeting the Mother of the Believers, Aisha, as well as Safwan, one of the believers. Therefore, immediately upon encountering such an individual, we must be wary of him and warn him against his actions. If he does not desist, and if he persists in relaying and circulating such speech among the people, spreading it without clear evidence, then his matter becomes grave indeed. His transgression against the Divine Law is immense, and his sin is profound. In this regard, the Almighty states: "Why did they not bring against it four witnesses? Since they did not bring the witnesses, then it is they, in the sight of Allah, who are the liars." (13) "And had it not been for the grace of Allah upon you and His mercy in this world and the Hereafter, a great punishment would have touched you for that in which you plunged." (14) "When you received it with your tongues and spoke with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge, and you thought it was insignificant while it was, in the sight of Allah, tremendous." (15) (Surah An-Nur). Speaking ill of a believer is a matter of grave consequence, attacking the honor and reputation of Muslims is a matter of immense gravity. It is treated lightly only by the ignorant, those who possess no understanding whatsoever of Allah's religion. Therefore, we must remain vigilant regarding this matter, which is so severe and momentous in the sight of Allah the Exalted, and we must guard against it ourselves, while simultaneously warning our brethren and offering them counsel should they fall into such an error, such as the Emir, the immediate supervisor, the official responsible for public morals, and others authorilatory figures. In accordance with the Almighty's saying: "And when there comes to them a matter concerning security or fear, they broadcast it; but had they referred it to the Messenger and to those in authority among them, those who can draw the correct conclusions from it would have known it. And were it not for the grace of Allah upon you and His mercy, you would have followed Satan, except for a few" (An- Nisa: 83). So, if such a matter occurs, meaning that evidence has reached you indicating that a specific individual has fallen into a transgression, then you must not go around spreading this talk to everyone you meet. Rather, you should go to the appropriate authority, the one responsible for such matters,and present the evidence to him, so that he may rectify this wrongdoing. Therefore, if we were to outline the proper procedure regarding this issue: the fundamental principle is to assume the best of the

individual and to dismiss the accusation against him. If rumors do arise, we should inquire about the evidence and verify its authenticity. If evidence is indeed found and provided that the harm caused by the transgression does not extend to the Muslim community at large, we should offer counsel to the individual who committed the offense or error, urging him to desist. If he fails to desist, we should refer his case to the relevant authority so that they may handle the matter. Finally, if the transgression has undeniably occurred and the evidence has been fully substantiated, we should inform those who possess the ability to rectify the situation. This is the true meaning of reform. As for merely engaging in idle chatter and gossip with everyone you encounter, spreading rumors and speculating without any basis, this is not the correct approach in any respect. We ask Allah the Magnificent, Lord of the Great Throne, to grant us success in doing what He loves and what pleases Him; to ensure that our hearts remain sound and free of malice toward our believing brethren; and to grant us the ability to rectify wrongdoing whenever it occurs. And our final prayer is: All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

Lesson Four:

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Indeed, all praise belongs to Allah, we praise Him, seek His aid, and seek His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evils of our own souls and from the wickedness of our deeds. Whomever Allah guides, no one can lead astray, and whomever He leads astray, no one can guide. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, alone, without any partner... As for what follows: We have paused here to reflect upon the words of the Almighty and Majestic, words that warn against seeking to propagate immorality: "Indeed, those who love for immorality to spread among those who have believed will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter. And Allah knows, while you do not know." (An-Nur: 19) Ibn Ashur (may Allah have mercy on him) stated: "The stern warning was directed specifically at the love for the propagation of immorality among the believers, serving as an alert to the fact that merely harboring such a desire even if it remains unfulfilled in action is, in itself, a grave sin. "he turns his face away" this is a metaphor for beeing prepared to manifest that which one desires to occur." End Quote. Al-Shawkani (may Allah have mercy on him) stated: "That is to say, they love to see indecency spread and become widespread, derived from the Arabic idiom shaʿa al-shayʾ (the thing became widespread), yashiʿu, shuyuʿan, shayʿan, and shayʿat, meaning it has appeared and proliferated. By those who have believed, the intended meaning is either the chaste and virtuous individuals, or anyone who possesses the attribute of faith. As for al-fahishah, it refers to the indecency of adultery, or evil speech. For them awaits a painful punishment: in this world, through the execution of the prescribed legal penalty alhadd upon them. And in the Hereafter, through the torment of the Fire." End Quote. Thus, the mere act of a person desiring that indecency should spread, even if he does not personally carry it out, is a matter of grave magnitude. Indeed, Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, has threatened such a person with punishment in both this world and the Hereafter. If such is the gravity of the matter regarding those who merely spread slanderous accusations against the chaste believing men and women, then what is to be said of those who actively disseminate indecency by promoting parties featuring dancing, singing, and nudity? Even more egregious is the fact that government institutions are now undertaking such activities under the guise of "entertainment" and "promoting happiness" as is currently occurring in the Land of the Two Holy Mosques, the Emirates, and other regions, just as it has in the past. Indecency is being normalized and

rendered palatable within societies where the disbelieving West could only have dreamed of achieving even a tenth of what these criminal, wicked, and Westernized individuals are now perpetrating. And what astonishment, what utter astonishment! Arises from the absolute silence maintained by so many who claim affiliation with the religion of Islam, the religion of chastity, the religion of purity, and the religion of high moral character. Indeed, even more astonishing is that those who dedicate themselves to Da‘wah and religious scholarship would remain silent in the face of such a reprehensible evil. Allah alone is sufficient for us, and He is the best Disposer of affairs. In such situations, it is incumbent upon believers to rise up in a vigorous stand for the sake of Allah’s religion. We commend the Muslim who stood up to denounce this evil, we pray for his success and sound judgment, and ask that Allah protect him from the plots of these criminal heretics, who seek to spread immorality throughout Muslim societies. This applies to chaste and pure societies there are those who employ every vile means to strip these societies of their religion, their chastity, their purity, and the moral values brought forth by this magnificent faith. It is the duty of every Muslim to denounce such practices using every means at their disposal, in accordance with the three levels of denunciation. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever among you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; if he is unable to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is unable to do so, then with his heart, and that is the weakest of faith." The strong believer is the one who actively changes this evil using whatever means he possesses, whether by his hand or his tongue. If his capacity fails him, then he should denounce it with his heart. How, then, can one justify the conduct of those who attend such dancing and licentious parties, with all the gender mixing they entail, while they are figures of public prominence, or claim affiliation with religious scholarship and Da'wah, or attempt to legitimize such acts through their tweets, their statements, or their praise of these frivolous events and the malicious institutions that propagate lewdness and corruption? Every Muslim must be vigilant not to consent to such matters. You, my beloved in Allah, must understand that if this phenomenon spreads, it will spare neither the righteous nor the wicked, just as Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, has stated: "And fear a trial which will surely not afflict exclusively those who wronged among you, and know that Allah is severe in punishment" (Al-Anfal: 25). For if punishment descends, it will encompass everyone. If we remain silent in the face of this evil tide, the punishment will inevitably befall us all. As Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He,

has said: "So why were there not among the generations before you those of authority who forbade corruption on earth— except for a few of those whom We saved from among them? But those who did wrong pursued that by which they were given luxury therein, and they were criminals. And never would your Lord have destroyed the cities unjustly while their people were reformers" (Hud: 116–117). Thus, reform is imperative, as is the denunciation of evil. We ask Allah the Magnificent Lord of the Great Throne to grant us success in denouncing this evil, to aid us in eradicating it, and to make this endeavor a means of purifying this Ummah from the filth of these transgressors and invaders. And our final plea is: "All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds."

Lesson Five:

All praise belongs to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, upon his family, and upon all of his companions. As for what follows: In this lesson, we will reflect upon the statement of Allah Glorified and Exalted be He: "O you who have believed, do not follow the footsteps of Satan. And whoever follows the footsteps of Satan, then indeed, he enjoins immorality and wrongdoing. And had it not been for the favor of Allah upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been purified [of sin]; but Allah purifies whom He wills. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing." (An-Nur: 21). Ibn Atiyyah (may Allah have mercy on him) stated: "This address is general, directed to all believers. The word khutuwat (footsteps) is the plural of khutwah (step), which denotes the distance between one's feet while walking. Thus, the implied meaning is: do not walk along his paths and ways, those consisting of vile deeds..." [He continued] until he reached the phrase: "...ma zaka, with the kaf sound lightened, meaning: no one would have been guided, nor would he have truly submitted [to Allah], nor would he have recognized his own rectitude..." [He continued] until he stated: "Then, Allah the Exalted mentioned that He purifies whom He wills, pecifically those for whom felicity was preordained, and whose righteous deeds served as a sign indicating that such felicity had indeed been decreed for them." Enf Quote. Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) stated: "This refers to his paths, his methods, and that which he commands." [Regarding the phrase] "And whoever follows the footsteps of Satan, indeed, he commands immorality and evil": this serves as a deterrent and a warning against such conduct, expressed in the most eloquent, concise, profound, and beautiful terms. He continued: Then the Almighty said, "And had it not been for the favor of Allah upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been purified." That is to say, were it not for His granting of repentance to whomever He wills and [were it not for His] purifying souls from their polytheism, their immorality, their deceit, and the base character traits inherent within them—each according to its specific nature, no one would have ever attained purification or goodness for himself. Rather, "Allah purifies whom He wills" that is, from among His creation "and He leads astray whom He wills, casting him into the perils of misguidance and error." End Quote. In this verse, my beloved in Allah, lies a warning against following the footsteps of Satan in every aspect of both religious and worldly life. For if a human being heeds Satan and takes the very first step alongside him, that initial step will inevitably be followed by many others, until he is ultimately led to Hellfire, may

Allah grant us and you refuge from it. Similar to this verse is the Almighty's statement: "O mankind, eat from whatever is on the earth [that is] lawful and good, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy." In the verse, "And to claim against Allah what you do not know" (Al-Baqarah: 168-169). For if man were not guided by Allah, and were he not seeking refuge in Allah, and returning to Allah, he would never have been guided, nor would he have known guidance or righteousness. Therefore, man must know his weakness and his dependence on Allah in all circumstances. And if he falls into sin, he must repent and return to Allah immediately, and not persist in error, so that he may not be able to return to it unless Allah wills otherwise. And Allah Almighty said, "˹They are˺ those who, upon committing an evil deed or wronging themselves, remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins—and who forgives sins except Allah?—and they do not knowingly persist in wrongdoing?" (Al Imran: 135)). For their sins, and who forgives sins except Allah? And they will be held accountable for what they did. While they knew a grave sin means a major sin, or they wronged themselves with a minor sin. So, the true believer, if he falls into sin, if he falls into disobedience, whether by his own will, meaning he loves it or wants to fall into this sin, or if someone forced him to fall into this sin, then he must immediately, if all the wills of mankind are subsumed by his will alone, turn away from it, repent to Allah, return from his sin, and return to Allah, the Exalted, no matter how great his sin or what he did. He must return and know that he has a Lord who forgives sins, no matter how great. Allah Almighty says, "Say, 'O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not transgress against yourselves. Allah forgives sins. Indeed, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.'" (Az-Zumar 39:53) All sins. If a person repents from associating partners with Allah (shirk), Allah Almighty forgives him. We have seen in the life of our Prophet how many companions became great and influential in Islam. They were previously polytheists, worshipping idols and committing all kinds of sins, yet they became leaders of the nation. They became our role models. Whoever does not call to them and does not recognize their rights and virtues becomes an opponent, as happens with the Rafidites (may Allah fight them). These are the ones who were in polytheism and misguidance when the time came for them. The warner and the bearer of good tidings came to them, and they believed in Allah, the Exalted, and repented and returned, and they became the leaders of the nation. In this time, many fall into the footsteps of Satan in the great pillars of this religion, such as jihad in the path of Allah,

enjoining good and forbidding evil, and changing the reality we see today. Following the footsteps of Satan and persisting in neglecting these two great pillars of the religion, which safeguard many aspects of religion and worldly life, becomes widespread. Every person knows himself and his current state. If he has taken a step or more on the path of Satan, let him stop today, return to Allah, take account of himself, return to the right path, and resume a life of piety, righteousness, and good deeds. Let him know that the One who grants success in this is Allah, the Exalted. A person may think that if he falls into these sins, these sins lead one to believe that happiness is fleeting, but true happiness lies in returning to Allah and turning to Him. The believer should also know that were it not for Allah's grace and His companionship, he would not have been abandoned, nor would he have known hardship or guidance. Allah Almighty says: "And were it not for Allah's favor and His grace upon you, not one of you would have remained steadfast. But Allah guides whom He wills, and Allah is Hearing and Knowing." (An-Nur 21) I ask Allah, the Most Great, to grant our souls steadfastness and bestow upon them piety, for He is their Master, Glory be to Him. And I ask Him to make us among His righteous servants who, when they fall into any of these sins and transgressions, turn to Him in supplication and repentance, asking Him, Glory be to Him, to grant us success and guidance. He is the Guardian of that and is Capable of it. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. And may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon our Prophet.

Lesson Six:

Praise be to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, and his companions and those who follow him. To proceed: In this lesson, we will discuss the words of Allah Almighty: “The only response of the ˹true˺ believers, when they are called to Allah and His Messenger so he may judge between them, is to say, “We hear and obey.” It is they who will ˹truly˺ succeed.” (An-Nur: 51) Al-Baghawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “This is not in the form of a statement, but rather it is an instruction from the Sharia, meaning that the believers should be thus, and the statement is in the accusative case, and its name is in His Almighty’s words: ‘that they should say “We hear and obey” means “We are with the supplication and we respond,” and those are the successful ones.’ End quote. Sayyid Qutb, may Allah have mercy on him, said: “It is hearing and obeying without hesitation, argument, or deviation.” Hearing and obeying are derived from absolute trust that the ruling of Allah and His Messenger is the ruling, and all else is falsehood. They stem from absolute submission to Allah, the Giver of Life, who disposes of it as He wills, and from the assurance that what Allah wills for people is better than what they will for themselves. Allah, who created, knows best what He created.” End quote. In this verse, Allah’s oath is obligatory upon the true believer: “If he is called to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger, he must respond and submit, and not hesitate, even if he knows that the ruling is against him or contradicts his desires.” As Allah Almighty said, “But no! By your Lord, they will never be ˹true˺ believers until they accept you ˹O Prophet˺ as the judge in their disputes, and find no resistance within themselves against your decision and submit..” (An-Nisa: 65) Then they will not feel any discomfort in themselves regarding what you have decreed and will submit in full submission. “And the hypocrites say, “We believe in Allah and the Messenger, and we obey.” Then a group of them turns away soon after that. These are not ˹true˺ believers. And as soon as they are called to Allah and His Messenger so he may judge between them, a group of them turns away. But if the truth is in their favour, they come to him, fully submitting. Is there a sickness in their hearts? Or are they in doubt? Or do they fear that Allah and His Messenger will be unjust to them? In fact, it is they who are the ˹true˺ wrongdoers.” (An-Nur: 47-50) This is the action of the hypocrites. The hypocrite, when called to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, turns away, except in one case: if he knows that the judgment will be in his favor. If the ruling is in his favor, he will come and submit to Allah and His

Messenger for judgment. But if he knows, and he already means, the ruling will most likely be against him, he turns away and abandons this ruling. The ruling of Allah and His Messenger. Let us know that the path to success and triumph in this world and the Hereafter lies in returning to the ruling of Allah and His Messenger in all matters of life. This is evident from the Almighty's words: "The only response of the ˹true˺ believers, when they are called to Allah and His Messenger so he may judge between them, is to say, "We hear and obey." It is they who will ˹truly˺ succeed.." (An-Nur: 51) These are the people of success in this world, and those who obey Allah and His Messenger, and fear Allah and are mindful of Him, are the ones who will be successful in the Hereafter, Allah willing. Therefore, every Muslim must strive for this success. And whoever calls today for a return to the rule of Allah's Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger must apply them in their call, both to themselves and their community. It is not enough for them to simply want to rule by Allah's law. If they do rule, the means must be legitimate, based on what the Messenger of Allah brought, all of which is from Allah Almighty. Therefore, whoever calls for this should not deviate from it and call for something else, like someone who wants to implement Sharia law through Western democracy. How can the Sharia of Allah Almighty be implemented through Western democracy, which contradicts the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger? Does he intend to do so by abandoning loyalty and disavowal and jihad in the path of Allah, and enjoining good and forbidding evil, and criticizing those who uphold it when he sees the people of jihad and the people of enjoining good and forbidding evil, and the people of loyalty and disavowal? He criticizes them, claiming that he is doing what is in the best interest of Muslims and that he is appeasing the tyrants so that when he gains power he will implement the Sharia of Allah Almighty. This is falsehood. If the Messenger of Allah, while in a state of weakness in Mecca, had truly believed this, he would have accepted the invitation of Utbah ibn Rabi'ah when he came to him and said, "If you desire rule, we will make you king. If you desire wealth, we will give you as much as you need. If you desire marriage, we will give you our most beautiful women in marriage," and so on. The Prophet refused him and recited the opening verses of Surah Fussilat to him. Utbah ibn Rabi'ah left, knowing and certain that what he had brought was the truth. He returned to his people and said to them, "Leave him alone with the Arabs, except for their fathers." Had they left him alone, it would have been better for them. As Allah Almighty said regarding those who do this and think they are doing good, or who believe in

some of the Scripture and disbelieve in other parts: “Do you then believe in some of the Scripture and disbelieve? They will be sent back to the lions of punishment, and Allah will not turn away from what you do. (85) Are they the ones who have exchanged the Hereafter for this world? So the punishment will not be averted from them, nor will they be helped. (86)” (Al-Baqarah). So how can one hope for victory in this state? I ask Allah, the Magnificent, Lord of the Magnificent Throne, to grant us success in implementing His law and applying His Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger in all aspects of our lives and in all our circumstances. He is indeed capable of that and worthy of answering our prayers. Our final supplication is that all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

Lesson Seven:

Praise be to Allah, may He make it good and blessed. May He bless it as He loves and is pleased with. O Allah, there is nothing easy except what You make easy, and You make sorrow easy if You will. In this lesson, you will reflect on the words of Allah: “They swear by Allah their most solemn oaths that if you ˹O Prophet˺ were to command them, they would certainly march forth ˹in Allah’s cause˺. Say, ‘You do not have to swear; your obedience is well known!’ Surely Allah is All-Aware of what you do.” (An- Nur 53). Al-Sa'di (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Allah Almighty informs us about the state of those who stayed behind from the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) in jihad, the hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease and weakness of support. They swear by Allah that they will be cursed in the future, or that they will be cursed when I send them out. The first meaning is more appropriate." Allah responded to them, saying, "Say, 'Do not swear,' meaning we do not need your oaths or your excuses, for Allah has informed us of your news. Your obedience is known and not hidden from us. We have known your reluctance and laziness without excuse. So there is no basis for your excuse and your oath. Only someone whose situation is uncertain and whose state is ambiguous needs that, for then perhaps an excuse will absolve him. But as for you, no, and nothing is needed. Rather, He awaits you and fears for you the coming of punishment." "Allah and His wrath." And why did He threaten them? By saying, “Allah is fully aware of what you do,” He will reward you for it with the fullest reward. This is their situation in reality.” End quote. This verse shows us the proof of true obedience to Allah and His Messenger: striving in the way of Allah. Therefore, striving in the way of Allah is the way of Allah and His Messenger. Those who believe in Allah and His Messenger and then strive and give their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah are the truthful ones. (Al-Hujurat: 15) We will discuss this verse, Allah willing, in our reflections on Surah Al-Hujurat. As for one who is lazy and reluctant to engage in jihad in the path of Allah without a legitimate excuse, there is no need for him to swear that if called to jihad, he will respond to the caller, because his actions testify to his falsehood. For if he truly intended to fight, he would have prepared for it. And the very fact that such people go out in this state is detrimental to jihad and its people. Allah Almighty said: “Had they ˹really˺ intended to march forth, they would have made preparations for it. But Allah disliked that they should go, so He let them lag behind, and it was said ˹to them˺, “Stay with those ˹helpless˺ who remain behind. Had they gone forth with you

˹believers˺, they would have been nothing but trouble for you, and would have scrambled around, seeking to spread discord in your midst. And some of you would have eagerly listened to them. And Allah has ˹perfect˺ knowledge of the wrongdoers." (At-Tawbah: 46-47) Consider the harm they cause to the mujahideen if they go out to fight; their harm is immense. They influence the mujahideen by spreading fear and discouragement among them. Therefore, such people are less deserving of being followed. And Allah, the Exalted, also says: "And the believers say, "If only a sûrah was revealed ˹allowing self- defence˺!" Yet when a precise sûrah is revealed, in which fighting is ˹explicitly˺ mentioned, you see those with sickness in their hearts staring at you like someone in the throes of death. It would have been better for them to obey and speak rightly. Then when fighting was ordained, it surely would have been better for them if they were true to Allah.." (Muhammad: 20-21) Ibn Kathir, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "Those who believe say, 'Why has a surah not been revealed?' meaning one containing the rulings on fighting. This is why He said, 'But when a decisive surah is revealed and fighting is mentioned therein, you see those in whose hearts is a disease looking at you with the look of one fainting from death.' That is, from their fear, terror, and cowardice at encountering the enemy. Then He said, encouraging them, 'It would be better for them to obey and speak good words.' Meaning, it would be better for them to listen and obey in the current situation. But when the matter is resolved, meaning when the situation becomes serious and fighting is imminent, if they were sincere to Allah, meaning if they purified their intentions for Him, it would be better for them." So, the one who is in a state of ease and claims that when the time for seriousness comes, and the time for fighting comes, and the time for jihad comes, then this claim of theirs is false because they have not prepared themselves for that, nor have they prepared themselves psychologically or practically for this matter. I recall a story told to me by some brothers in Al-Mukalla prison who escaped. A group of sheikhs came to the brothers, and one of them used to say, "If you want jihad, then when the time for jihad comes, you will see these white turbans at the forefront." So what happened? May Allah guide him. When the time for jihad came, and the Houthis swept through the regions and occupied many areas and cities, this man left Yemen entirely and now claims to be seeking knowledge or something similar. Where is his talk when he was advising the brothers in prison to abandon the path of jihad and to leave prison afterward, sitting idly by? Where is his statement: "When the time for jihad comes, you will see these white turbans at

the forefront"? This man's claim is false. If he were truthful to Allah, he would be at the forefront in these circumstances that the Muslim nation is going through. Many of those who are pointed out as the original leaders are now the ones leading the battles in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and other parts of the world. We ask Almighty Allah to guide such people or to protect us from their evil. He is capable of all things. And jihad in the path of Allah. Our final supplication is that all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

Lesson Eight:

By Allah, we seek His help and forgiveness, and we seek refuge in Allah from the evil of our own souls and the evil of our deeds. Whoever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whoever He leads astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone, without a partner, and I bear witness that the grandfather of His servant... In this lesson, we will discuss and reflect upon the words of Allah Almighty: "Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good that He will certainly make them successors in the land, as He did with those before them; and will surely establish for them their faith which He has chosen for them; and will indeed change their fear into security, ˹provided that˺ they worship Me, associating nothing with Me. But whoever disbelieves after this ˹promise˺, it is they who will be the rebellious.." (An-Nur: 55). Al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “It was said that the reason for this verse was that some of the Prophet’s companions complained about the hardship of fighting the enemy and the fear they felt for themselves and their families, and that they would not lay down their weapons. So the verse was revealed.” Abu al-‘Aliyah said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) stayed in Mecca for ten years after the revelation came to him, fearful, he and his companions calling to Allah secretly and openly. Then he was commanded to migrate to Medina, where they lived in fear, constantly armed. A man said: “O Messenger of Allah, will there not come a day when we will be safe and lay down our weapons?” He (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “You will not live in fear until a man among you sits in the great assembly, unarmed, with no weapons on him, and he will not lay down his weapons and feel safe.” This verse was revealed, and Allah granted victory to His Prophet over the Arabian Peninsula, so they laid down their weapons and felt safe.” End quote. Sheikh Al-Amin Al-Shanqiti (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “In this verse, the Almighty, Exalted is He, mentioned that He promised those of this nation who believed and did righteous deeds that He would grant them succession in the land, meaning He would make them the successors of the earth, who would have authority and influence over it.” The verses indicate that obedience to Allah through reverence and righteous deeds is a cause of strength, succession in the land, and influence over the world. He (may Allah have mercy on him) continued: “And His saying, Exalted is He, ‘He will grant them succession,’ the ‘lam’ is an introduction to an implied oath, meaning that Allah promised them and swore in His promise that He would grant them succession.” End quote. This verse is a great verse, and it

contains reassurance for whom? For the striving servants of Allah, for those who strive to establish Allah’s religion on earth. The path to establishment, succession in the land, and comprehensive security is through faith and righteous deeds. Therefore, the striving Muslim must strive with perfect faith and strive to perform righteous deeds. In this verse, Allah Almighty reassures the righteous believers of their empowerment on earth. And God Almighty also says in another verse, “Surely, following the ˹heavenly˺ Record, We decreed in the Scriptures: “My righteous servants shall inherit the land.”” (Al-Anbiya: 105). And it came in the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family and grant them peace, that the verses “in which there is reassurance for the believers, for the steadfast, for those who act according to the religion of Allah. That victory and the ultimate outcome will be theirs.” The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: “This matter will not reach night and day, and Allah will not leave a house of mud or hair without bringing this religion into it, with the might of the mighty or the humiliation of the lowly, a might by which Allah will exalt Islam and a humiliation by which Allah will humiliate disbelief.” Allah is the One. And by Allah, when we feel the words of the Messenger of Allah, “O you who are indifferent, you will be indifferent to us,” all obstacles in the path of empowering Allah's religion vanish. Even if we are not the ones empowering, let us be a bridge to that empowerment, by Allah's permission. And the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Give glad tidings to this nation of glory, religion, elevation, victory, and empowerment." These are the words of the Messenger of Allah: "And Allah has promised us this, and it will be so." And let us increase in righteous deeds on the path of empowering Allah's religion on earth. As for achieving this, it is Allah's promise to the believers, and Allah will not break His promise. Empowerment and victory will come despite the enemies of Allah. This matter will not last night or day, and Allah will not leave a single house of mud or hair without bringing this religion into it, with the might of the mighty or the humiliation of the lowly. Allah will exalt Islam and humiliate disbelief. Allah is the One. And by Allah, when we truly understand the words of the Messenger of Allah, "O people of this Ummah, all obstacles on the path to establishing Allah's religion will vanish. Even if we are not the ones who establish it, let us be a bridge to it, by Allah's permission.” And he, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Give glad tidings to this nation of glory, religion, elevation, victory, and establishment." So these are the words of the Messenger of Allah: "And Allah has promised us this, and we will do so." And let us increase in

righteous deeds on the path to establishing Allah's religion on earth. As for achieving this, it is Allah's promise to the believers, and Allah will not break His promise. Establishment and victory will come despite the enemies of Allah. And Allah, the Exalted, clarified in this verse the duty incumbent upon the believers after the conquest of Mecca and the establishment of the religion of Allah. He said, “They worship Me and do not associate anything with Me.” And similar to this is His saying, “Those who, if We test them, will be among the righteous.” “And establish prayer and give zakat and give charity and be mindful of the consequences of their actions.” (Al-Hajj: 41) As for those who break their covenant after being empowered, who change their ways, turn back on their heels, and are ungrateful for the blessing of security and empowerment, they are the wicked and misguided. This is clarified by the Almighty's words: "And whoever disbelieves after that - those are the wicked ones" (An-Nur 24:55). Here is a statement by Imam Al-Baghawi (may Allah have mercy on him) that clarifies and explains this: "He says regarding the Almighty's words, 'And whoever disbelieves after that,' that He meant ingratitude for the blessing, not disbelief in Allah. Those are the wicked ones, the disobedient to Allah. The scholars of exegesis said that the first to disbelieve in this blessing and deny its right were those who killed Uthman. When they killed him, Allah changed their situation and instilled fear in them until they began fighting each other after having been brothers." End quote. The beginning of the discord in this nation was after the killing of Uthman, and the Muslims became enemies of one another. And to this day, we see this reality, unfortunately. Why? Because we did not show gratitude for the blessing, the blessing of empowerment. This means that during the time of the Companions and the Rightly Guided Caliphs, Islam reached a level of influence it had never reached before. Yes, Islamic states came after that, and the reach of Islam expanded, but there was no realization of Islam on earth as there was during the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. There were transgressions and there was injustice. But during the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was in the city of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), thinking about his subjects in Iraq, even thinking about their livestock. “If a mule or a camel were to stumble in Iraq, I would fear that Allah would hold me accountable for it.” This is what Umar said. The point is that empowerment on earth is a promise from Allah Almighty, and Allah will not break His promise. So the obligation is to strive for what? For righteous deeds, and to do what Allah Almighty has commanded them, and to avoid what Allah

Almighty and His Messenger have forbidden. Then let this nation rejoice in the empowerment of the earth and security after fear. This is a promise from Allah, and Allah will not break His promise. I ask Allah, the Great, Lord of the Mighty Throne, to empower His religion on earth and to make us among those who are empowered on earth, and to make us among those who strive for complete faith and righteous deeds so that Allah Almighty may empower His religion on earth. And our final supplication is that all praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

Lesson Nine:

All praise is due to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, his companions, and those who follow him. Continuing from our previous lesson in which we discussed and reflected upon the words of Allah Almighty: “Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good that He will certainly make them successors in the land, as He did with those before them; and will surely establish for them their faith which He has chosen for them; and will indeed change their fear into security —˹provided that˺ they worship Me, associating nothing with Me. But whoever disbelieves after this ˹promise˺, it is they who will be the rebellious.” (al Nur 55). Following this verse, Allah Almighty explained the state of the disbelievers and the polytheists, and that they cannot escape His power. “Do not think ˹O Prophet˺ that the disbelievers can escape in the land. The Fire will be their home. Indeed, what an evil destination!” (Al Nur 57). Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “And His saying, may He be exalted, ‘Do not think,’ means do not think that those who disbelieved, that is, those who opposed Allah and denied Him, can escape Allah’s power on earth. Rather, Allah is capable over them, and He will punish them for that with the severest punishment. And for this reason, Allah, may He be exalted, said, ‘And their abode,’ meaning, in the Hereafter, ‘is the Fire, and how wretched a destination!’ meaning, how wretched a final destination it is for the disbelievers, and how wretched a resting place! And how wretched a resting place!” Sayyid Qutb, may Allah have mercy on him, said: “If you remain steadfast on the right path, then the strength of the disbelievers will not deter you, for they cannot escape Allah’s power on earth. Their apparent strength will not stand in your way. You are strong in your humility, strong in your organization, strong in your resources, which you possess. You may not be as well-equipped as they are materially, but the believing hearts that strive will produce miracles and wonders.” End Quote. This is the context for this noble verse. After Allah Almighty mentioned His promise to the believers of victory, empowerment, and security, He clarified that no matter how arrogant, boastful, and powerful the disbelievers may be, they cannot escape Allah’s power in this world. Their ultimate fate will be loss, defeat, and humiliation, and in the Hereafter, they will be in Hell, a wretched and miserable destiny. And Allah Almighty has revealed many verses in His Holy Book that indicate this: “And those who spread corruption in the land will be given a little respite, then their abode will be Hell, and their resting place will be in Hell.” (Al Imran: 196-7) And He, the Exalted,

said: “Indeed, those who spread corruption will be deprived of their wealth and will be deprived of it. They will be deprived of it. And those who spread corruption will be deprived of it.” (Al Anfal: 36) And other verses. So today, the believer should not look at the strength of the disbelievers, but rather at the strength of Allah Almighty. How great is the strength of the disbelievers today? What power do they possess? Battleships? Planes? Tanks? Massive armies? All of this is nothing compared to the strength of Allah Almighty. Indeed, Allah is the Almighty. And He, the Exalted, said, “One of His servants,” Gabriel, peace be upon him, “overturned the villages of Sodom, the people of Lot, and raised them up to the heavens, then turned them down to the seventh earth.” This Gabriel, peace be upon him, is described by Allah, the Exalted, as “possessor of power, near the Possessor of a firm throne” (At-Takwir 20). So what then of the power of Allah, the Exalted! And Allah is able to defeat the disbelievers today, but He informed us and said, may He be glorified and exalted: “So when those who disbelieve meet you, the slaves are truly needed. When they are captured, then take them captive. And there is no ransom after that, or [offer] a ransom until the war reaches its peak. That is so. And if Allah had willed, He could have reduced their number, but [He did not], so that He might test those who hate the disbelievers. So do not go astray in the way of Allah. He has blinded them; He will guide them and make them know. O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will make your lives easy.” And those who narrated, woe to them and lead them astray. How strange it is that someone hears Allah's promise to the believers of victory and empowerment, and His threat to the disbelievers of disgrace and humiliation in this world and a wretched end in the Hereafter, and then leaves jihad and support. And fears the power of America, Russia, Iran, their allies, and the like... and dreads the consequences of his jihad and support... How strange indeed! How can we have such verses and then fear jihad? How can we have such verses and then fear the power of Allah's enemies? It is but one hour that will come, and you will die. If it comes while you are in bed, you will die in bed. If it comes while you are on the battlefronts, you will be killed on the battlefield. Indeed, you may be on the battlefield and die. Naturally, you might be in bed when a missile strikes and kills you; death cannot be hastened or delayed. The courage of the brave cannot delay it, nor can the cowardice of the cowardly. And this is the unsheathed sword of Allah, Khalid ibn al-Walid,” after he had fought in all the battles and braved the dangers, then died in his bed.” And the people of jihad understand the meaning of Khalid’s words at his deathbed, when

death came to him, when he said: “I am the one whose body is not a handspan wide, but has been struck by a sword or thrust by a spear, and yet I die today a natural death, like a camel.” So, may you not sleep, you cowardly one: meaning, the coward who fears to attend a battle. “And I am the one who attended a hundred battles, and martyrdom did not come to me in those battles, and yet I die today in my bed? May you not sleep, you coward who fears to plunge into the thick of wars,” and to plunge into the thick of jihad in the way of Allah. And he knows and calls out in the Book of Allah the promise, either of victory or martyrdom,” and he knows what is in the Book of Allah of the fate of the martyrs: “And do not revile those who died in the way of Allah. Rather, they are alive.” They are raised up, hoping that Allah will bestow upon them of His bounty, and they rejoice in those who will be left behind them, that there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they see. They rejoice in the promise of Allah and His bounty, and the reward of the believers will not be diminished. I ask Allah, the Almighty, Lord of the Mighty Throne, to make us among those who know Allah's promise to the believers and fulfill it. Our supplication is that all praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

Lesson Ten:

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, seek His help, and ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil of our own souls and from the evil of our deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever He leads astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone, without partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. He delivered the message, fulfilled the trust, advised the nation, and through him Allah removed the darkness. He strove in the cause of Allah as was His due until certainty came to him. May Allah reward him with the best reward He has ever given a prophet for his nation. Now then: In this lesson we will reflect on Allah's words: "The ˹true˺ believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and when they are with him on a public matter, they do not leave without his permission. Indeed, those who ask your permission ˹O Prophet˺ are the ones who ˹truly˺ believe in Allah and His Messenger. So when they ask your permission for a private matter, grant permission to whoever you wish and ask Allah's forgiveness for them. Surely Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (An-Nur: 62) Ibn Ashur, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "This verse is a fundamental principle of the organization of groups in the affairs of the nation, because it is a Sunnah for every gathering to have an imam, a leader who manages the affairs of that gathering. The legitimacy of the imamate points to this system. It is also a Sunnah that no group should gather without appointing a leader over them. The one who leads the gathering is the representative of the ruler of the Muslims, and he is in the position of the Prophet of Allah. Therefore, no one should leave his gathering except after seeking his permission, because if making the matter of slipping away due to the desire for the present would be an excuse for the meetings to break up without achieving the benefit for which they were gathered." End quote. This verse highlights the importance of the leader in all collective matters, such as jihad, Friday prayers, congregational prayers, travel, and so on. It also emphasizes the importance of an individual seeking permission from their leader for any unforeseen event that may arise during a gathering, whether for jihad or any other purpose. One must seek permission if such an event occurs. Everyone should know that Allah Almighty has linked this to faith, or rather, to the perfection of faith. This is not a negation of faith, but rather a requirement for perfect faith: "The ˹true˺ believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and when they are with him on a public matter, they do not leave

without his permission" (An-Nur: 62). The Prophet's seeking forgiveness from Allah further clarifies that this seeking of permission is essential. And in the Messenger of Allah's seeking forgiveness is the explanation that this seeking of permission for some matter involves neglecting what is preferable: "So when they ask your permission for a private matter, grant permission to whoever you wish and ask Allah's forgiveness for them. Surely Allah is All- Forgiving, Most Merciful" (An-Nur: 62). This indicates that the one who sought permission and left this meeting has neglected what is preferable, and therefore the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) seeks forgiveness for him. If leaving a meeting after seeking permission is considered neglecting what is preferable, then what about those who slip away from crucial meetings in the life of the nation today, especially those concerning jihad in the path of Allah, and who lag behind in jihad after having known it, practiced it, and tasted the sweetness of confronting the disbelievers to please Allah, and then are content to settle for worldly life after having been at the pinnacle of Islam? These people have erred in their failure to perform this duty, after they had learned of this obligation and the honor and dignity it contains, and the humiliation it brings to the disbelievers, and the empowerment it brings to the religion of Allah. These people have made a great error by leaving them to wage jihad without permission. They are similar to a person who comes to ask the prince for permission to leave jihad for the sake of his house, or his home, or his family, or for any of these reasons and illegitimate excuses that Allah Almighty has clarified in His saying: "Say, ˹O Prophet,˺ 'If your parents and children and siblings and spouses and extended family and the wealth you have acquired and the trade you fear will decline and the homes you cherish—˹if all these˺ are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and struggling in His Way, then wait until Allah brings about His Will. Allah does not guide the rebellious people." (At- Tawbah: 24). So if this is the mistake of one who abandons jihad and clings to worldly life and returns to his home, what about the one who abandons jihad and surrenders himself to the tyrants? Whoever abandons jihad and returns to the embrace of the tyrant, and may provide information that harms the mujahideen and affects their actions and aspirations, has necessarily committed a crime. If he does not repent, he is in grave error. This one who abandons jihad, for what reason? Without a reason, either due to a personal desire, a sickness in his heart, or for worldly reasons. He desired worldly things, so would that his mistake had been merely returning to his home and clinging to worldly things. Rather, he goes to the enemies of the

mujahideen and surrenders himself to them. This is a greater mistake and a more serious crime, and he is in grave danger. As we have mentioned, he might say, "I saw mistakes among the mujahideen." To such a person we say, "Do tyrants and their governments not make mistakes?" Even if the mujahideen did make mistakes, how many of their mistakes would compare to the crimes of those to whom you surrendered yourself? When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) sent a detachment, Nakhla, led by Abdullah ibn Jahsh, may Allah be pleased with him, either on the last day of Jumada al-Thani, they entered Rajab and thought it was the last day of Jumada al-Thani or the beginning of Sha'ban. They found the caravan, and the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) told them not to kill anyone. They thought the sacred month had ended. May Allah be pleased with them, they seized the caravan, killed one of the polytheists, and captured two. The point is that when they returned to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), he rebuked them for killing in the sacred month. They said, "O Messenger of Allah, by Allah, we did not know." They had made a mistake. The Quraysh sent word to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, saying, "How can you commit wrongdoing (fujur) in the sacred month? You claim to be a messenger from Allah Almighty, and then you commit wrongdoing in the sacred month!" So Allah Almighty revealed, "They ask you ˹O Prophet˺ about fighting in the sacred months. Say, ‘Fighting during these months is a great sin.'" (Al-Baqarah: 217). This means it is a major sin to fight in the sacred months; however, “But hindering ˹others˺ from the Path of Allah, rejecting Him, and expelling the worshippers from the Sacred Mosque is ˹a˺ greater ˹sin˺ in the sight of Allah. For persecution is far worse than killing” (Al-Baqarah: 217). If these mujahideen made a mistake by killing them in the sacred month, then your crime is greater in comparison to their mistake. “But hindering ˹others˺ from the Path of Allah, rejecting Him, and expelling the worshippers from the Sacred Mosque is ˹a˺ greater ˹sin˺ in the sight of Allah. For persecution is far worse than killing” (Al-Baqarah: 217). This is how the Quran deals with the mistakes of the mujahideen; they do make mistakes! No one works without error; mistakes are inevitable. But how do we deal with the mistakes of the mujahideen? We deal with the mistakes of the mujahideen by comparing them to the mistakes of their enemies. Which is the greater mistake? The mujahideen of today or America? Which is the greater mistake? The mujahideen of today or the tyrants who changed Allah's law and allied themselves with the disbelievers? This is how we weigh matters, and the mistakes of the mujahideen are forgiven in comparison to

their good deeds. When the Muslims were defeated in the Battle of Uhud, how did Allah Almighty deal with the mistake of the archers who descended from the mountain and caused that defeat? Allah Almighty said: “Indeed, Allah fulfilled His promise to you when you ˹initially˺ swept them away by His Will, then your courage weakened and you disputed about the command and disobeyed, after Allah had brought victory within your reach. Some of you were after worldly gain while others desired a heavenly reward. He denied you victory over them as a test, yet He has pardoned you. And Allah is Gracious to the believers.” (Al-Imran: 152). Those who fled in that battle were defeated and ran away. What did Allah, the Exalted, say to them? “Those of you who turned back on the day the two armies met, it was Satan who caused them to slip because of some of what they had earned at Sabua. But Allah has already forgiven them. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing.” (Al-Imran: 155). So, Allah, the Exalted, deals with the mistakes of the mujahideen either by comparing these mistakes to the mistakes of Allah's enemies or by forgiving and pardoning them. And you come and say that the mujahideen have mistakes, so you go and surrender yourself to their enemies and give information that harms them! And you think that you have done well? How can this be! Then consider, no matter how many mistakes the mujahideen make, is the solution to surrender yourself to their enemies, or is the right and correct solution to reform, advise, and be patient until Allah’s command comes? And by Allah, O you who surrender, you know that your claim is nothing but a flimsy excuse and pretext you wanted to use as a reason for fleeing from jihad. And Allah is the One from whom help is sought, and to Allah all disputes are settled. If you had been honest with yourself and stated that the reason for this was your own luck or weakness, as some young men who surrendered themselves were, but were honest with themselves when they were asked after surrendering, "Why did you surrender?" They said, "I couldn't, but our brothers are better than us and they are on the right path, while I was weak, so I surrendered." This person, even though he was wrong, is still better off than someone who comes and surrenders himself to the enemies of Allah and then places the blame and the fault on whom? On the people of jihad. Allah is the One from whom help is sought. We also warn this man who has surrendered that by surrendering himself to the enemies of Allah, he exposes himself to temptation. They will not be satisfied with his mere surrender; they will demand guarantees that he will not return to jihad, and they may even ask him for information that harms the mujahideen. This constitutes acquiescence to the enemies of Allah and

informing on Muslims, which is extremely dangerous and may even amount to allying with the disbelievers, Allah forbid. You should not put yourself in such a situation, in such humiliation and disgrace. What if you had remained steadfast with your brothers? Or, as I told you before, if you must return home, that is a mistake. This matter is wrong, but you will not reach the level of error and crime that those who surrender themselves to the enemies of Allah do. I ask Allah, the Almighty, Lord of the Mighty Throne, to keep us steadfast in His religion and in striving in His cause, and to guide us to what He loves and is pleased with. He is the Guardian of that and is Capable of it. With this lesson, Allah willing, we have concluded our reflections on Surah An-Nur, and we will begin, Allah willing, our reflections on Surah Al-Hujurat. We ask Allah for success and guidance, and our final supplication is that all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Worlds...

Sector 2: Surah al Hujurat

Lesson Eleven:

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and the best outcome is for the righteous, and there is no aggression except against the oppressors. Peace and blessings be upon the leader of the messengers, our Prophet Muhammad, and upon his family and all his companions. Now then, God willing, in our lessons we will begin our reflections on Surah Al- Hujurat. In the previous lesson we finished our reflections on Surah An-Nur, and today, God willing, we will begin our reflections on Surah Al-Hujurat. Beginning with the words of Allah Almighty at the beginning of the chapter: “O believers! Do not proceed ˹in any matter˺ before ˹a decree from˺ Allah and His Messenger. And fear Allah. Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.” (Al- Hujurat: 1) Al-Qurtubi, may Allah have mercy on him, said: “That is, do not put forward a statement or action before Allah and the statement and action of His Messenger concerning matters that you should take from him regarding religion and worldly affairs. Whoever puts forward his statement or action, may Allah bless the Messenger, may Allah’s prayers and peace be upon him, has placed it before Allah Almighty, because the Messenger of Allah only commands on the authority of Allah Almighty.” End quote. Ibn Kathir, may Allah have mercy on him, said: “That is, do not rush into things before him, but rather follow him in all matters.” End quote. This characteristic of the believer, in giving precedence to the words of Allah Almighty and the words of His Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family and grant them peace, and in his actions, demonstrates the believer's proper conduct with Allah and His Messenger. And the believer must be diligent with Allah and His Messenger in these important matters. What are they? He must learn from Allah and His Messenger all his affairs, both those related to religion and those related to worldly matters. In this verse, Allah Almighty clarifies the precedence of the words of Allah Almighty and the words and actions of His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) over the words and actions of anyone lesser than them, regardless of their status or virtue. Many things indicate this, such as when Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) was asked about prayer in Mina, and he said: "Prayer in Mina is shortened." They said: "But Abu Bakr and Umar prayed it in full." He repeated his statement to them, saying: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) prayed in Mina shortened." They repeated their statement to him, and he said to them: "By Allah, stones are about to rain down on you from the sky! I

tell you it is the Messenger of Allah, and you tell me it is Abu Bakr and Umar." This is despite the high status of Abu Bakr and Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) in Islam. No statement should be given precedence over the statement of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), even if it is the statement of Abu Bakr and Umar (may Allah be pleased with them). So how can it be given precedence over the statement of anyone lesser than Abu Bakr and Umar? Also, Allah Almighty says in Surat An-Nur: “So let those who disobey His command beware, lest a trial afflict them or a painful punishment befall them.” (63). Also, among the things we see in this time is the error of those who speak of benefits and harms when there is a text that commands or forbids an action or statement. You find some people, and some who claim knowledge, who speak of a benefit when the apparent meaning of the text contradicts that benefit they speak of. The principle is that the word of Allah and His Messenger should be followed, and this statement should be rejected. There are never any benefits that contradict the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger. This is what the scholars of jurisprudence say: in such a case, this benefit is nullified, and a Muslim should never adopt it. Therefore, it is always necessary to refer to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet. Every benefit that is not in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet is nullified, and every harm that is in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet, that is, that which Allah and His Messenger have clarified, is a harm and must be rejected. For example, when we come to the topic of jihad in the path of Allah, all the reasons that make jihad obligatory for Muslims have occurred in this era. Yet, you find some people who believe it is in their best interest not to go out for jihad in the path of Allah. This supposed benefit is nullified and should not be accepted. Yes, jihad involves hardship and difficulty, but it also contains benefits known only to Allah. Today, we see the benefits that result from engaging in jihad and seeking martyrdom in the path of Allah everywhere. Even if they are not apparent today, they will be revealed someday. And even if they are not apparent to some people today, they will be revealed to them one day, Allah willing. The principle of self-defense is essential, as demonstrated when Moses, peace be upon him, came to the Children of Israel, and they said, “We have always been oppressed—before and after you came to us ⌜with the message⌝.” He replied, “Perhaps your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successors in the land to see what you will do.” (Al- Araf: 129) Therefore, the Sunnah of defense is necessary until victory and empowerment come, by Allah's permission. This is what is happening today.

Today we are in the throes of a new birth for this nation, and a new birth for the rule of Islam on earth will come, by Allah's permission. Therefore, the Muslim must know that every benefit not found in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger is rejected, and every harm not clarified by Allah Almighty and His Messenger is rejected. Also, there are many rulings for which there are texts indicating them. In these cases, the apparent meaning of the texts is taken. One should not interpret a clear and explicit text regarding a ruling unless there is clear evidence that diverts the ruling from the apparent meaning of the text. So we ask Allah, the Great, Lord of the Mighty Throne, to grant us success in following His Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger, to help us in this, and to grant us life and death upon it. He is the Guardian of that and is Capable of it. And our final supplication is that all praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

Lesson Twelve:

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, seek His help, and ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil within ourselves and from the evil of our deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever He leads astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone, without partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. Now then, in this lesson, we will reflect on the words of Allah Almighty: “O you who have believed, if a disobedient person comes to you with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.” (Al-Hujurat: 6) Ibn Jarir al-Tabari - may Allah have mercy on him - said: "Allah Almighty says: 'O you who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, if a wicked person comes to you with news about a people, then investigate.' The reciters differed in the reading of His saying (then investigate). So most of the reciters of the people of Medina read it (then verify) with a 'tha', and it was mentioned that in the codex of Abdullah it was dotted with a 'tha'. And some of the reciters read it (then investigate) with a 'ba', meaning wait until you know its truth, do not rush to accept it. And likewise the meaning of (then verify). And this is also from the manners that the people of understanding should observe and use, which is that if a wicked person tells them news, they should investigate his news and not take it without evidence, for that is a great danger and falling into sin. If his report is treated as that of a truthful and just person, then judgment is passed accordingly, and lives and property are unjustly lost because of that report, which is a cause for regret. Rather, the obligation when a report from a wicked person is to verify and investigate. If the evidence and indications show that he is truthful, then it is acted upon and accepted. If they show that he is lying, then it is rejected and not acted upon. This is evidence that the report of a truthful person is accepted, the report of a liar is rejected, and the report of a wicked person is suspended, as we mentioned.” End quote. Thus, Imam Ibn Jarir - may Allah have mercy on him - explained that if a report comes, it is in one of three states: either it is a report from a truthful person whose truthfulness and justice are known, then it is accepted; or it is a report that comes from a liar, then it is rejected; or it is a report that comes from a wicked person, then we suspend judgment on his report until we are certain, ascertain, and verify this report. It is necessary to ascertain the report of a wicked liar; otherwise, we fall into sin and into a problem, as Allah Almighty said in this verse: “If a wicked person comes to you with a report,

ascertain the truth, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful." This suggests to us that we must know the condition of the one who transmits the news, and it is not enough for him to be a Muslim. No, we must know the condition of this person who brought this news. What is his condition? Is he one of the truthful ones? Is he one of those who take the news without verifying it? Is he one of the people who like to transmit news and spread it everywhere? So we must know the condition of this transmitter of the news. Let us know that the consequences of accepting the news of a liar and of not verifying news are grave and serious. We may fall into injustice and slander; in short, we fall into error and sin. Therefore, Allah Almighty, in this verse, clarifies for us the necessity of verification. Also, there are those who frequently transmit news without verifying its accuracy. The believer must avoid accepting it from them, even if they are sometimes right, because it has become their habit and their default to transmit information without verifying its accuracy. I mean, so-and-so, I know this person; whenever he brings us news, he is truthful in it. So I will not be wrong if I take his news as true one day. But so-and-so, I know another person who does not verify news. As soon as news comes to his ears, he immediately speaks of it and spreads it. This one must be cautious about his news until we are certain of the truth of his words. And in the hadith, the Prophet of Allah said: "Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the falsest of speech." Some people base their conclusions on analyses, assumptions, and connecting things until they arrive at a conclusion that they consider certain news, as if they saw or heard it. Then they begin to spread it on this basis. Such people should not be taken seriously; their words should be rejected, and they should be advised. If they do not repent, they should be placed in the category of liars from whom no word or report should be accepted. In Sunan Abi Dawud, may Allah have mercy on him, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "How wretched is the mouth of a man who says, 'They claimed.'" What does "They claimed" mean? It means that he frequently says, "They said, they said..." And as the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "Allah dislikes three things for you: gossip, excessive questioning, and wasting money." A truly faithful man is not always preoccupied with hearsay and gossip. No, if news comes to him directly, he verifies it. If he confirms its accuracy and then wants to rectify the matter, he must convey it to those concerned and those who can change the wrong if there is one, or advise the person who received the news, or whatever is related to it. Such matters must be verified. Also, people's understandings vary.

Some people take news and interpret it according to their own understanding, then go and convey their understanding to others. Their understanding may be wrong, and they may be conveying news and events based on their own interpretation. Therefore, it is necessary to anticipate this. By Allah, there are some people you know very well, and whose way of thinking and understanding you are familiar with. When they bring you news, you know that the intention isn't as they said. There's something else to what they reported. When you go and investigate, you find that you were right in your suspicion because you know their understanding is limited in some matters. Therefore, it's essential to keep in mind, when listening to someone conveying news, that understanding varies. We ask Allah, the Almighty, Lord of the Mighty Throne, to guide us to what He loves and is pleased with, and to help us to verify and ascertain the truth of the news that is transmitted, especially in this time in which there are many trials, and many liars, and many who do not verify. We ask Him, the Exalted, to guide us to what is good for our religion and our worldly life, and our final supplication is that all praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

Lesson Thirteen:

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, his companions, and those who follow him. In this lesson, we will reflect on the words of Allauh Almighty: “And if two groups of believers fight each other, then make peace between them. But if one of them transgresses against the other, then fight against the transgressing group until they ⌜are willing to⌝ submit to the rule of Allah. If they do so, then make peace between both ⌜groups⌝ in all fairness and act justly. Surely Allah loves those who uphold justice. The believers are but one brotherhood, so make peace between your brothers. And be mindful of Allah so you may be shown mercy.” (Al-Hujurat: 9 nd 10). Sayyid Qutb - may Allah have mercy on him - said: “What results from this brotherhood is that love, peace, cooperation, and unity should be the norm in the Muslim community, and that disagreement or fighting should be the exception that must be returned to the norm immediately upon its occurrence, and that it is permissible for the believers to fight other rebellious brothers in order to bring them back into line and to remove this departure from the norm and the rule.” End quote. Ibn Ashur, may Allah have mercy on him, said: “Since it is common practice among people that if a dispute arises between two brothers, it is incumbent upon the rest of the brothers to strive to resolve it by seeking reconciliation between them, so too is it the case for Muslims. If a rift occurs between two groups among them, all of them should rise up to strive for reconciliation between them and to send emissaries to mend what has been broken and to lift what has been afflicted and caused.” End quote. Our discussion and reflections on this verse will not concern the rebellious group and its rulings. Rather, we will focus on reconciliation among Muslims, on reconciliation between disputing Muslims. The obligation when a dispute arises between brothers is to initiate direct reconciliation before matters escalate and reconciliation becomes difficult. If the problem is addressed in its infancy, reconciliation becomes easier, Allah willing. The one who reconciles between people, between Muslims, must be aware, intelligent, and knowledgeable about the methods of reconciliation. We do not complicate the matter, nor do we codify it. No, but he must understand how to reconcile between two brothers or between two groups if a dispute arises. Allah Almighty said, "So fear Allah and amend that which is between you" (Al-Anfal: 1). On the authority of Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him), he said: “This is a warning from Allah to the believers, that they should fear Allah and reconcile their differences.” This means there is no

path for people other than piety and reconciliation. Disagreements occur among Muslims, but if there are those within the Muslim community who constantly strive for reconciliation, and within a single group, or sect, or any group involved in a particular matter, there are people who love to reconcile their brothers, this will resolve many disagreements and, by Allah’s permission, bring the Muslim community and the Muslim nation into a state of lasting harmony and affection. On the authority of Sahl ibn Sa'd, it was narrated to me that the people of Quba' fought until they threw stones at each other. The Messenger of Allah was informed of this, and he said, "Let us go and reconcile them." This means the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, did not delay. Immediately upon learning of a dispute that had arisen between two groups or factions of Muslims, he immediately undertook to reconcile them. "Let us go and reconcile them." It should be the motto of this nation: "Let us go and reconcile them." If we hear of any dispute between two brothers, a dispute between two groups, or a dispute within the Muslim community, we should immediately say, "Let us go and reconcile them." And in this lies great merit in reconciling Muslims. Allah Almighty says: “There is no good in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity, or kindness, or reconciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking the pleasure of Allah, We will surely grant him a great reward.” (An- Nisa: 114). All private conversation, all speech, most speech is devoid of good except for these three: enjoining charity, kindness, or reconciliation between people. And He mentioned reconciliation between people among these three. So whoever desires that his speech be among the best speech should reconcile between his brothers and between people. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: “Shall I not tell you of a degree better than prayer, fasting, and charity?” They said: Yes. He said: “Reconciliation between people, and discord between people is the razor.” Al-Tirmidhi said, and it is narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) that he said: "It is the razor; I do not say it shaves the hair, but it shaves away the religion." Meaning, religion is lost due to discord. Faith and piety decrease due to discord. When we see in the Muslim community today, disputes and quarrels among Muslims have increased. As for what happens between Muslims and disbelievers, or between Muslims and apostates, [those who have altered Allah's law and those who have allied themselves with disbelievers], this is a necessary right and is part of jihad in the way of Allah. If Muslims engage in jihad in the way of Allah against these groups that are hostile to Islam and the

religion, then it must be supported. As for what happens between Muslims and brothers among themselves, reconciliation is necessary. When these disputes increased, and parties and groups increased, and everyone started to act from the perspective of his group and party, and whoever was with him in this group or party was the close friend, and whoever was outside this group or party was the one who was distanced, and if corruption occurred between him and his Muslim brother, he did not care about that. Rather, the gap of disagreement may rise or widen because of this matter, and this is falsehood and has nothing to do with truth. And in the hadith, the Prophet of Allah says, "The best charity is reconciling between people." This means that those who love to give charity and spend their money in the way of Allah and for charitable works, the best thing they can do in the realm of charity is to reconcile between people. Yes. Although Allah and His Messenger have condemned lying and liars, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, permitted it when reconciling between Muslims. He, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "He is not a liar who reconciles between people, conveying good or saying good." Ibn Shihab said, "I have not heard of permission being granted for anything that people say that is a lie except in three cases... and he mentioned among them... reconciling between people." This means that a person may come and, if he wants to reconcile two brothers or two groups, mention the good qualities of that group, and if that hasn't happened, mention praise of that group or praise of one brother for his brother, and that he spoke well of him, and so on, until hearts soften and reconciliation is achieved with ease, by Allah's permission. As for the one who sows discord among Muslims, incites them, and fuels the flames of division among them, he is doing the work of Satan and fulfilling the desires of the enemies of the Muslim community by creating division among them, inciting them, and increasing their problems. This is the one who is doing the work of Satan. How do we know that he is doing the work of Satan? Because the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Satan has despaired of being worshipped by those who pray in the Arabian Peninsula, but he will continue to incite them." This was also the work of the hypocrites during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). They tried to sow discord among the Muslims. Allah Almighty says: “Those who built a mosque for dissension and disbelief and to cause division among the believers and as a station for those who had previously waged war against Allah and His Messenger. And they will surely swear, ‘We intended nothing but good.’ But Allah bears

witness that they are liars.” (At-Tawbah 9:107). Among the aims of the hypocrites in building the Mosque of Dissension, and among the aims of the hypocrites in this time, is the construction of facilities that have a major purpose, especially intelligence and security agencies whose work is to incite discord among Muslims. And as we have seen, some governments support the warring factions, the quarreling factions, so that this matter remains with them and sovereignty belongs to these criminals, and they have the base, or... this was Britain's policy before [divide and conquer] and these British and American lackeys are doing the same thing. Divide and conquer. But we ask Allah, the Almighty, Lord of the Mighty Throne, to turn their plots against them, to reconcile the Muslims, to revive their hearts with faith and piety, to restore their harmony and love for one another, and to revive the Muslim nation anew as it was in the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who, whenever he saw the seed of such discord, would immediately come and put an end to it in its infancy. As mentioned in the hadiths and in the interpretation of the words of Allah Almighty: “O you who have believed, if you obey a group of those who were given the Scripture, they would turn you back, after your belief, to disbelievers.” (100) “And how can you disbelieve while the verses of Allah are being recited to you and His Messenger is among you? And whoever holds fast to Allah has certainly been guided to a straight path.” (101 Al Imran). The interpretation of these verses states that the Jews were angered by the harmony between the Ansar (Helpers) of the Aws and Khazraj tribes in Medina. One of them passed by and saw the Aws and Khazraj gathered together, conversing, exchanging stories, and laughing. He said, "By Allah, we have no place here, especially now that the Banu Qayla have gathered." So he sent his servant to infiltrate their gathering and remind them of the Battle of Bu'ath, which took place before Islam and before the Hijra (migration). The two tribes became agitated and almost fought. When the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) heard of this, he came quickly, dragging his cloak, until he stood among them and said, "Is this a call to the ways of ignorance while I am among you? Leave it, for it is foul." Then Allah revealed these verses to clarify the evil of the enemies of Allah and how they sought to incite discord and division among the Muslims. We ask Allah, the Almighty, Lord of the Mighty Throne, to reconcile our differences and guide us to what fosters harmony and love among Muslims. He is the Guardian of that and is Capable of it. Our final supplication is that all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

Lesson Fourteen:

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, seek His help, ask for His forgiveness, and seek His guidance. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil within ourselves and from the evil of our deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever He leads astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone, without partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. Now then: In this lesson, we will reflect on the words of Allah Almighty: “O believers! Do not let some ˹men˺ ridicule others; they may be better than them, nor let ˹some˺ women ridicule other women; they may be better than them. Do not defame one another, nor call each other by offensive nicknames. How evil it is to act rebelliously after having faith! And whoever does not repent, it is they who are the ˹true˺ wrongdoers.” (Al-Hujurat: 11) Al-Sa'di (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "This is also one of the rights of believers over one another: that no group should mock another group with any speech, word, or deed that indicates contempt for the Muslim brother. This is forbidden and impermissible, and it indicates the mocker's self- admiration. Perhaps the one being mocked is better than the mocker, as is usually the case. Mockery only comes from a heart full of bad morals, adorned with every despicable trait. This is why the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family and grant them peace, said: 'One of the worst things about a person is that he should despise his Muslim brother.'" End quote. Sayyid Qutb, may Allah have mercy on him, said: “The virtuous society established by Islam, guided by the Quran, is a society of refined manners. Every individual within it possesses inviolable dignity, which is part of the dignity of the community. To criticize any individual is to criticize oneself because the entire community is one, and its dignity is one.” End quote. This verse warns Muslims against mocking one another, as this leads to societal corruption. If Muslims frequently mock one another, society will be corrupted. Why? Because each person will begin to see themselves as superior to their brother. This is one of the societal corruptions that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, warned us against in many hadiths. Among them, he said: “Do not envy one another, do not outbid one another, do not hate one another, and do not turn your backs on one another...” Do not engage in Najsh (a form of price manipulation). What does Najsh mean? It means that if a sale is held at auction, as it is called today, and the owner of the item bids, for example, saying it is worth a thousand, then another person comes along and

bids a thousand and one hundred without intending to buy. This person, who wants the item, is forced to bid higher than the other person, and so on. This is Najsh. Do not hate one another. Hatred is well-known. Do not turn your backs on one another. That is, do not disagree, turning your backs on one another. One of the scholars, after the prayer, when the prayer was finished and the people were going back to the mosque, would forbid them from doing so for fear of falling into Najsh, that a Muslim would turn his back on his brother. "And do not outbid one another, and be, O servants of Allah, brothers. A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim; he does not wrong him, nor does he forsake him, nor does he despise him. Piety is right here," and he pointed to his chest three times. "It is enough evil for a man to despise his Muslim brother. Every Muslim is inviolable to another Muslim: his blood, his wealth, and his honor." This is the Islamic character to which the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, directed us: that the relationship of a Muslim with his fellow Muslim should be like this, that the relationship of a Muslim with his fellow Muslim should be one of respect, brotherhood, and love. As for looking down upon him, seeing oneself as better than one's brother, or mocking him for something he has done, this is corrupting to society. Also, it is the duty of a Muslim to defend his brother or brothers if one of them transgresses against their honor in their absence. If this character were widespread among us, there would be no justification for backbiting, no justification for making the honor of Muslims the subject of conversation in gatherings. And in the action of the person who defends his brother in his absence, there is a great reward, and this action will be his salvation from Hellfire, Allah willing. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “Whoever defends the honor of his brother, Allah will shield his face from the Fire on the Day of Resurrection.” In another narration of the hadith, or in a different wording: “Whoever defends the honor of his brother in his absence, Allah will shield his face from the Fire on the Day of Resurrection.” Because of responding to the slander of a Muslim brother, we are saved from Hellfire. Therefore, a believer must defend the honor of his brother to the best of his ability. The first time he hears someone speaking unjustly about one of his Muslim brothers or a group of Muslims, he must respond to them [thinking that] the response must be harsh. No, he should stop it gently. My dear brother, we should not speak ill of our Muslim brothers. This is backbiting, which neither Allah Almighty nor His Messenger approve of. That is, with a kind and gentle approach, Allah willing, the information will reach this Muslim brother who has

fallen into this error, and we will rectify the matter without problems or major disagreement, or anything like that, or we will allow Satan to enter through a door of good. This verse contains many benefits and reflections. Allah willing, we will continue our reflections on this verse in our next lesson. We ask Allah, the Almighty, Lord of the Mighty Throne, to teach us what we do not know and to benefit us with what we have learned. He is the Guardian of that and is Capable of it. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, and all his companions.

Lesson Fifteen:

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings be upon the leader of the messengers, our Prophet Muhammad, and upon his family and companions, all of them. To proceed: We are continuing our previous lesson with the words of Allah Almighty: “O believers! Do not let some men ridicule others; they may be better than them, nor let some women ridicule other women; they may be better than them. Do not defame one another, nor call each other by offensive nicknames. How evil it is to act rebelliously after having faith! And whoever does not repent, it is they who are the true wrongdoers.” (Al-Hujurat: 11). In this lesson, we will talk about the words of Allah Almighty and reflect on the words of Allah Almighty: “And do not insult one another or call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of wickedness after [one has attained] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers.” Al-Baghawi - may Allah have mercy on him - said: “Do not insult one another, meaning do not criticize one another or slander one another, and do not call each other by nicknames. Calling each other by nicknames is an interaction from the word ‘nabz,’ which is a nickname, and it is when a person is called by something other than what he was named by. Ikrimah said: It is when a man says to another man, ‘O wicked one, O hypocrite, O infidel.’ Al-Hasan said: The Jew and the Christian used to convert to Islam, and after his conversion, he would be called, ‘O Jew, O Christian,’ so they were forbidden from that. Ata’ said: It is when you say to your brother, ‘O dog, O donkey, O pig.’ It was narrated from Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, that he said: Calling someone by nicknames means that a man committed sins and then repented, so he is forbidden from reproaching him for his past actions. "How wretched is the name of wickedness after faith!" That is, how wretched is the name to say, "O Jew!" or "O wicked one!" after one has believed and repented. It was also said that its meaning is that whoever engages in mockery, name- calling, and slander is a wicked person, and how wretched is the name of wickedness after faith! So do not do that, lest you deserve the name of wickedness. And whoever does not repent from that, then those are the wrongdoers. End quote. This verse indicates the prohibition of name-calling and using inappropriate nicknames for a Muslim, whatever these nicknames may be, and it includes everything that Al-Baghawi, may Allah have mercy on him, mentioned and transmitted from other predecessors. This means that calling a Muslim by a name other than his own is prohibited, except in cases

where it is for identification, such as identifying al-A'mash (may Allah have mercy on him). He was known as al-A'mash, and other such titles that were for identification only, or when describing someone to another, saying, "So-and-so is the lame one," meaning the one who had a limp, or "So-and-so is the blind one." This is permissible only for identification. However, to insult and bestow inappropriate titles upon a Muslim who does not deserve them is not permissible and is forbidden. Everything mentioned previously falls under this. The greatest form of insulting is when a Muslim calls his brother "O disbeliever," "O sinner," "O innovator," or "O enemy of Allah," when he does not deserve it. This is one of the greatest forms of insulting and one of the greatest titles, which should never be used, and the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) warned against it for anyone who engages in it. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "If a man says to his brother, 'O disbeliever,' then one of them has indeed earned it. If he is as he said, then so be it; otherwise, it returns upon him." No, by Allah, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) did not do that even with his enemies. Indeed, one of the reasons many people embraced Islam was the Prophet's (peace and blessings be upon him) character, as Allah says: "And you are truly a man of outstanding character." (Al-Qalam: 4). The reason people converted to Islam was because of his noble character, peace and blessings be upon him. Then his companions, may Allah be pleased with them, came and adopted these good morals that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, had, and they transmitted these morals from him. Anas reported: "The Messenger of Allah was neither obscene, nor did he curse or insult. When he was reprimanded, he would say, 'What is wrong with him? May his forehead be covered in dust.'" Today, the least that can be said, or rather, the matter has become acceptable to people: "You dog! You donkey!" This is very normal. It might be said, "You infidel! You sinner!" This is a major sin, and it may even be that in some Muslim circles, people have deviated from the original principles of righteousness and adherence to Allah's religion, so that accusations of immorality and adultery have become normal, even though this is a grave matter for which a Muslim is threatened if he commits it. Indeed, slander has become widespread among people without any oversight. So-and-so is the adulteress, so-and-so is the son of an adulteress. Where will you go from Allah Almighty? Where will you go from this act? By Allah, if there were a Sharia law that applied the punishment of 80 lashes for slander, many people would receive it. The spread of this behavior, the slander of Muslims and its prevalence among

them, is a corruption of society that should not exist and must be reformed and addressed. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The believer is neither a slanderer, nor a curser, nor obscene, nor foul- mouthed." This means it is not in the character of the perfect believer, the one who strives for the perfection of faith, to slander Muslims, their lineage, their social standing, their character, or their physical appearance. This should not be done by a believer, nor should excessive cursing, cursing over small or large matters. This has become widespread among people, so that cursing is on the tip of their tongues. No sooner does something small or large happen than they utter a curse. Nor should the obscene person be one whose character is foul- mouthed, harsh, and rough towards believers. This should not be done by a believer. Nor should the obscene person be one whose speech is filled with obscenity, vulgarity, and bad language, and this becomes his habit and he becomes known for it. A believer should not fall into such things. We ask Allah, the Almighty, Lord of the Mighty Throne, to improve our morals and to help us reform our societies, advise them, and spread good morals in these societies. He is the Guardian of that and is capable of it. Our final supplication is that praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. May Allah’s blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad a.d upon his family and all his companions.

Lesson Sixteen:

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, seek His help, and ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil within ourselves and from the evil of our deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever He leads astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone, without partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. Now then: O Allah, there is nothing easy except what You make easy, and You make sorrow easy if You will. Let us continue our reflections on Surah Al-Hujurat, having stopped at the words of God Almighty: "O believers! Avoid many suspicions, ˹for˺ indeed, some suspicions are sinful. And do not spy, nor backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of their dead brother? You would despise that! And fear Allah. Surely Allah is ˹the˺ Accepter of Repentance, Most Merciful." (Al-Hujurat: 12) Sufyan al-Thawri (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "There are two kinds of suspicion, one of which is sinful, which is to suspect and speak of it, and the other is not sinful, which is to suspect but not speak of it. And do not spy. Spying is searching for people's faults. Allah Almighty has forbidden searching for what is hidden of people's affairs and following their faults so that what Allah has concealed of them is not revealed." End quote. Ibn Jarir, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "Allah Almighty says, 'O you who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, do not harbor much suspicion about the believers,' meaning, do not think ill of them, for the one who harbors suspicion is not justified. [Allah] Exalted is His praise [says] (Avoid much suspicion), and He did not say all suspicion, since He had permitted the believers to think well of one another. He said, 'Why, when you heard it, did not the believing men and women think well of one another and say, "This is a manifest falsehood"?' So Allah, may His praise be exalted, permitted the believers to think well of one another and to say so, even if they were not certain of what they said." End quote. So in this verse, Allah clarifies and warns us against much suspicion, which is suspicion of the believer who appears good. That is, Allah Almighty forbids us to suspect the believer who appears good of evil. Likewise, whoever suspects evil of a believer, if one of us suspects evil of his believing brother, then if he remains silent, there is nothing upon him unless he speaks of what he suspects of evil without real evidence; then he falls into sin. (O you who have believed, avoid much suspicion. Indeed, some suspicion is sin.) Why? Because they spoke of something that came to his mind and he suspected it, he doubted it, and it is not true and he has no evidence for it.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, warned us against this matter, against suspicion, saying, "Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the falsest of speech." He also said, "Do not spy on one another, do not seek out one another's faults, do not envy one another, do not turn away from one another, do not hate one another, and be, O servants of Allah, brothers." So he, peace and blessings be upon him, began with the matter of suspicion because suspicion leads to what he, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned: spying, seeking out one another's faults, envy, turning away from one another, and hatred. We must be, O servants of Allah Almighty, brothers. Abu Sulayman al-Khattabi said: His statement, “Beware of suspicion,” refers to the prohibition against acting upon and believing evil suspicions, not to mere fleeting thoughts of suspicion that cross one's mind, for these are beyond one's control. Allah Almighty said, “Indeed, some suspicion is a sin,” thus He did not make all suspicion a sin. Others said: The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) forbade acting upon evil suspicions about your brother if goodness prevails in him. It was narrated on the authority of Umar that he said: It is not permissible for a Muslim who hears a word from his brother to think ill of it when he can find some good interpretation for it. That is, if a believer hears something from his brother that could be interpreted as either good or bad, he should interpret it in a good way, not in a bad way. It was also mentioned on the authority of Umar that he said: “Make seventy excuses for your brother, and if you cannot find any, then say, ‘Perhaps, perhaps.’” That is, after seventy excuses, what do you say? “Perhaps, perhaps you should assume goodness for him.” Ali ibn Abi Talib said: "Whoever knows of a noble quality in his brother should not listen to what others say about him. And whoever is good outwardly, we have more hope for his inner self." Mu'ammar narrated on the authority of Isma'il ibn Umayya, who said: "Three things do not escape the grasp of humankind: superstition, suspicion, and envy. He said: 'What saves you from suspicion is not speaking of it; what saves you from envy is not wishing harm upon your brother; and what saves you from superstition is not acting upon it.'" As for espionage, it is the act of searching, investigating, and examining the inner workings of things, and it is most often used in the context of evil. Sayyid Qutb, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "Espionage may be the action that follows suspicion, or it may be the initial action to uncover faults and expose shameful acts." End quote. So if you suspect your brother of something bad, meaning these thoughts and suspicions are bound to come to you, then if they come, do not speak of them, and try to repel

them as much as you can from yourself. When Allah Almighty mentioned in this verse and began with suspicion, suspicion may be the beginning of evil, Allah forbid. A person may have a bad suspicion about his brother, which may lead him to spy. After spying, backbiting occurs. He goes and speaks about what he thought and imagined, then he spies. If he sees something, he gets up and speaks and backbites about his brother. This might be the first act, and this spying might be the beginning [meaning an act devoid of suspicion]. It might be what one is commanded to spy on, and the most evil and dangerous form of spying for its perpetrator is spying on Muslims for the benefit of the disbelievers. This is the greatest of sins, and it involves allying oneself with the disbelievers, thus making its perpetrator an apostate, Allah forbid. To spy on one's Muslim brothers for the benefit of their enemies is to be allied with the disbelievers, and by doing so, one departs from the religion of Allah Almighty, as He says: “O believers! Take neither Jews nor Christians as guardians—they are guardians of each other. Whoever does so will be counted as one of them. Surely Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.” (Al-Ma'idah: 51). And what allegiance is greater than revealing the private matters of Muslims or planting an electronic chip that drones can target, or other such methods of spying? This brings great evil upon its perpetrator. If he does not repent, the Muslims must arrest him and carry out the punishment on him, so that he may be a lesson to others. And if spying, I mean, look, spying on Muslims for the benefit of the enemies, there is no disagreement on this point of Islamic law. But if spying on believers is for the purpose of denouncing wrongdoing or knowing the situation of people who might be suspected of committing a mistake, then one should not spy on them, even if the denunciation of the wrongdoing was considered by the Companions to be an act forbidden by Allah. Al-Bayhaqi, may Allah have mercy on him, narrated on the authority of Abdur- Rahman ibn Awf that he was on guard duty with Umar one night in Medina. While they were walking, a light shone from a house, so they went towards it. When they approached a door, they heard people inside making loud noises and commotion. Umar stood up, took Abdur-Rahman by the hand, and said, “Do you know whose house this is?” I said, “No.” He said, “This is the house of Rabi’ah ibn Umayyah ibn Khalaf, and they are drinking now. What do you think?” He consulted him. Abdur-Rahman said, “I think we have done what Allah has forbidden (Do not spy), so we have spied.” And Umar (radhiyallahu anh) left them and went away. Even in this place, when he spied on those people who were drinking alcohol and making noise, even in this place, the

believer should not spy, because of the prohibition from Allah Almighty against them (And do not spy), and let every believer know that the punishment for whoever spies and follows the faults of the believers is that Allah will follow his faults and expose him, even in his house. The Messenger of Allah said: “O you who have embraced Islam with your tongues and faith has not reached your hearts, do not harm the Muslims and do not follow their faults, for whoever follows the faults of his Muslim brother, Allah will follow his faults, and whoever Allah follows his faults and he submits, He will expose him, even in the depths of his house.” We ask Allah for protection from this matter of spying and from what leads to spying, such as ill-conceived suspicions, or from a person spying of their own accord, or from a person spying on behalf of the enemies of Muslims. We ask Allah Almighty to protect us from this, for He is the Guardian and the One Capable of all things. Allah willing, we will continue our reflections on the rest of the verse in our next lesson. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and all his companions.

Lesson Seventeen:

In the name of Allah, the MostGracious,the MostMerciful. All praise is due to Allah, abundant, good, and blessed praise, as our Lord loves and is pleased with. Peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and his companions. Now then: Let us continue our reflections on the words of Allah Almighty: “O believers! Avoid many suspicions, ˹for˺ indeed, some suspicions are sinful. And do not spy, nor backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of their dead brother? You would despise that! And fear Allah. Surely Allah is ˹the˺ Accepter of Repentance, Most Merciful.” (Al-Hujurat: 12) In our previous lesson, we talked about suspicion and spying, and in this lesson, we will talk about backbiting (And do not spy, nor backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of their dead brother? You would despise that! And fear Allah. Surely Allah is ˹the˺ Accepter of Repentance, Most Merciful). The meaning of backbiting is: Do not speak ill of one another behind one's back about what is in one's character. That is, do not mention your brother's faults behind his back. The hadith clearly explains the meaning of backbiting. On the authority of Abu Hurairah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Do you know what backbiting is?" They said: "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said: "It is mentioning your brother in a way that he dislikes." It was said: "What if what I say about my brother is true?" He said: "If what you say is true, then you have backbitten him. But if what you say is not true, you have slandered him.” Slander is worse than backbiting, meaning to lie about him and make false accusations against him. The scholar Ibn Kathir, may Allah have mercy on him, mentioned the consensus on the prohibition of backbiting. Due to the enormity of the sin of backbiting against one's Muslim brother, it is likened to eating the flesh of one's Muslim brother after death. This comparison has several aspects between the two: First, the one being backbitten is unaware that his brother is being backbitten, just as the dead person is unaware of who is eating his flesh. Second, the one who backbites his living brother has violated his brother's sanctity, just as the one who eats the flesh of his dead brother has violated his sanctity. Third, backbiting is a disgusting act to sound natures, just as eating the flesh of the dead is also disgusting. Amr ibn al-Aas was traveling with some of his companions when they passed by a dead, bloated mule. He said, "By Allah, it is better for one of you to eat from this until his stomach is full than to eat the flesh of a Muslim." May Allah protect us. This is a comparison by Allah Almighty between one who

backbites his brother and one who eats the flesh of his dead brother. This is a terrible and repulsive act, and therefore this comparison serves to deter people from backbiting and this great sin. One of the things a Muslim must be aware of in this matter, the matter of backbiting, is the error of someone who says, "My brother doesn't dislike it from me," meaning that he finds backbiting acceptable and mentions his brother with what he dislikes. So if he is told, "Fear Allah, my brother, don't backbite your brother," he says, "What?" He says, "My brother doesn't dislike it from me." This is wrong, for backbiting is inherently forbidden. And also, whoever says to his brother: "My brother, my honor is permissible for you to speak about whenever you want," this is also not permissible, and Imam Al- Nawawi, may Allah have mercy on him, denied it in the book of supplications. Why? The reason for this is that backbiting is inherently forbidden. You may ask your brother for forgiveness, and he may forgive you after the matter has occurred, because it is his right, and he is permitted to waive his right. However, to justify this from the outset is not permissible. To say to you, "Do as you please, backbite me whenever you want," is unacceptable. Backbiting is inherently forbidden, and you are not allowed to justify it to any of your brothers. Therefore, this matter is not permissible. A society in which backbiting is widespread and rampant is a corrupt society, and its members deserve the wrath and displeasure of Allah Almighty because they did not denounce this evil. This is a reprehensible act, and the problem in this era is that this reprehensible act has become acceptable to people. In fact, gatherings are not considered enjoyable without backbiting about so-and-so. This is not permissible, and we must denounce this reprehensible act. Allah Almighty said, "The disbelievers among the Children of Israel were condemned in the revelations of David and Jesus, son of Mary. That was for their disobedience and violations. They did not forbid one another from doing evil. Evil indeed was what they did." (Al-Ma'idah: 78-79). They did not denounce wrongdoing when it occurred, so they deserved Allah's wrath, anger, and curse, may Allah protect us. We ask Allah for well-being. And Allah Almighty said: " If only there had been among the ˹destroyed˺ peoples before you, ˹O believers,˺ virtuous individuals who forbade corruption in the land— other than the few We had saved ˹from the torment˺. But the wrongdoers ˹only˺ pursued their ˹worldly˺ pleasures, becoming wicked. And your Lord ˹O Prophet˺ would never destroy a society unjustly while its people were acting rightly." (Hud: 116-117). Reform is imperative. It is a terrible thing for this to spread in Muslim society, for it to become acceptable for everyone to hear their brother backbiting

and mentioning things about their brothers that they dislike, and then not rebuke him. We must rebuke our brothers and distance ourselves from this despicable trait. The true believer must distance himself from this trait, forbid it, and warn his Muslim brothers against practicing it and spreading it among them. In this way, harmony, brotherhood, and love will prevail among Muslims, and good morals will prevail among them, and these bad morals will disappear from them. We ask Allah, the Almighty, Lord of the Mighty Throne, to protect us from these morals and from backbiting itself. We ask Him, the Exalted, to reform our societies and to reform our hearts, deeds, and words. He is capable of all things and worthy of answering our prayers. Our final supplication is that all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

Lesson Eighteen:

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, seek His help, and ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil within ourselves and from the evil of our deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever He leads astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone, without partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. We continue our reflections on Surah Al-Hujurat. In this lesson, God willing, we will discuss and reflect on the words of Allah Almighty: “O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may ˹get to˺ know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All- Knowing, All-Aware.” (Al-Hujurat: 13) Ibn Atiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "The purpose of this verse is to establish equality among people. Then Allah Almighty said: (And We made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another) meaning so that you do not boast. And some of you want to be more honorable than others. But the path to honor is not like this. (Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you)." End quote So, pride and generosity are not based on lineage, wealth, color, beauty, or anything else that people boast about today. Rather, generosity and distinction lie in piety, in performing acts of obedience and abstaining from sins. People differ in this, and the most honorable people in the sight of Allah Almighty are those closest to Him and most pious. Whoever wishes to know their standing with Allah Almighty should examine their level of piety, for Allah says, "Indeed, the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is the most pious." Thus, the measure of generosity with Allah Almighty is piety. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings upon him) warned us against boasting among ourselves about pre- Islamic customs. He urged us, peace and blessings be upon him, to distinguish ourselves and show honor to one another through piety. It was narrated on the authority of Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both, that the Messenger of Allah delivered a sermon in Mecca on the day of the conquest. He said: “O people, Allah has removed from you the arrogance of pre-Islamic ignorance and its boasting about lineage. People are of two kinds: a righteous, pious, and honorable man in the sight of Allah, and a wicked, wretched man insignificant in the sight of Allah. All people are the children of Adam, and Allah created Adam from dust.” So, people are of two kinds, as the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned: a righteous,

pious man, even if he is a black slave; a righteous, pious man, even if he has no lineage; even if he is ugly in appearance; no matter what he is, if he is righteous and pious, he is honorable in the sight of Allah. And a wicked, wretched man, even if he is of the highest lineage from the family of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. But he is a wicked, wretched man, or he is the most handsome of people, or he is the wealthiest of people; he is insignificant in the sight of Allah if he is a wretched merchant. On the authority of Abu Hurairah, who said: The Messenger of Allah was asked, "Who is the most honorable of people?" He replied, "The most honorable among them in the sight of Allah is the most pious." They said, "That is not what we are asking you about." He said, "Then the most honorable of people is Joseph, the Prophet of Allah, son of the Prophet of Allah, son of the Prophet of Allah, son of the Friend of Allah." They said, "That is not what we are asking you about." He said, "Are you asking me about the origins of the Arabs?" They said, "Yes." He said, "The best of you in pre-Islamic times are the best of you in Islam, if they understand the religion." It is a condition that if a man was among the best of people in pre-Islamic times, he will be among the best of people in Islam if he gains understanding of Allah's religion. On the authority of Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, who said: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Allah does not look at your appearances or your wealth, but He looks at your hearts and your deeds." He does not look at your appearances, whether beautiful or ugly, nor does He look at your wealth, whether much or little. Rather, He looks at your hearts and your deeds. Piety, as the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, mentioned in the hadith, "is here," and he pointed to his chest three times. Piety is in the heart. If the heart is filled with piety towards Allah, the Exalted, then it is closest to Allah, the Exalted. Piety towards Allah is likewise with deeds. Allah, the Exalted, looks at deeds. A pious person without deeds is not suitable. Piety towards Allah, the Exalted, must be accompanied by deeds. It is not suitable for a person to say, "I am pious towards Allah, the Mighty and Majestic," and then abandon good deeds. On the authority of Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “He whose deeds lag behind will not be hastened by his lineage.” Meaning, on the Day of Resurrection, in the scales of ranks, in closeness to Allah Almighty, in entering Paradise, “He whose deeds lag behind will not be hastened by his lineage.” It is incumbent upon the Muslim to measure his closeness to and love for people according to their piety. If they are more pious, then they are closer to Allah

Almighty. And if they are closer to Allah Almighty by performing good deeds, by performing acts of obedience and refraining from evil, then they must be closer to Him. Closeness and love are not measured by beauty, wealth, lineage, or good company, but rather by piety. All these things are weighed on the scale of Allah Almighty, and nothing matters except piety. If people's measure of love and closeness is piety, it will be a cause for the betterment of society, the revival of Islamic values, and the eradication of many customs and behaviors contrary to Islamic law that have spread among Muslims. Because of this scale, humility and gentleness will spread among the members of the Muslim community. Thus, we will return to the goodness we once possessed and our superiority over all nations. This behavior is also a great invitation to other nations living in the hell of racism and discrimination. [And] this is America, which speaks of values, principles, equality, and freedom (and so on), and which, unfortunately, is the role model for many Muslims who speak our language and live among us. Yet, racism is rampant there. White race, black race, and so on. Even racism at the expense of all values and principles. This is America and other countries, which today people see as important and want to imitate in many of their actions and words. This is America teeming with racism and discrimination based on race, color, wealth, status, and other reasons for discrimination that have no weight with Allah Almighty. We ask Allah, the Almighty, Lord of the Mighty Throne, to help us be humble among ourselves, and to make the measure of closeness and love between us the fear of Allah, the Exalted. Whoever is closest and most God-fearing is our beloved and close friend. Whoever is wicked and wretched, or far from the fear of Allah, the Exalted, or whose fear is weak, then his closeness and love with us will be according to his fear. We ask Allah, the Almighty, Lord of the Mighty Throne, to be among those who listen to the word and follow the best of it. And our final supplication is that all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

Lesson Nineteen:

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, his companions, and those who follow him. [Allahuma Amin] No then: We continue our reflections on Surah Al-Hujurat. In this lesson, God willing, we will reflect on the words of Allah Almighty: “The ˹true˺ believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger—never doubting—and strive with their wealth and their lives in the cause of Allah. They are the ones true in faith.” (Al- Hujurat: 15). Ibn Kathir, may Allah have mercy on him, said: “His saying, ‘The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger and then do not doubt,’ means that they do not waver or hesitate, but remain steadfast in one state. Which is pure belief, and strive with their wealth and their lives in the cause of Allah,’ means that they sacrifice their lives and their most precious possessions in obedience to Allah and for His pleasure. ‘Those are the truthful ones,’ meaning in their statement when they say that they are believers. Not like some of the Bedouins who have nothing of the religion except the outward word.” End quote. Al-Saa'di (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "(The believers) are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger and then do not doubt and strive with their wealth and their lives in the cause of Allah. That is, those who combine faith and striving in His cause. For whoever strives against the disbelievers, this indicates complete faith in the heart. That whoever strives against others for Islam and the implementation of its laws, then his striving against himself is even more imperative. And because whoever is not strong enough for striving, this is evidence of the weakness of his faith. And Allah Almighty stipulated for faith the absence of doubt. That is, the doubt that beneficial faith is the firm conviction in what Allah has commanded to be believed in, which is not affected by any doubt whatsoever." End quote. So, in this verse, Allah Almighty has made the proof of true faith, without any doubt, striving in the way of Allah with one's wealth and life. Why? Because the one who is sincere in his faith does not withhold what is most precious to him: his life and his wealth, in the way of Allah. He offers this willingly, offering himself to Allah Almighty, knowing that when he offers his life to Allah Almighty, he will be rewarded with a great reward: “And never think that those who have been killed in the cause of Allah are dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision. (169) Rejoicing in what Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty, and they receive good tidings about those [to be martyred] after them who have not yet joined them - that there will be no fear

concerning them, nor will they grieve." (Al Imran). And other virtues of martyrdom in the cause of Allah, the virtues of sacrificing oneself for the sake of Allah, and also the wealth that those who spend in the cause of Allah to support and establish this religion, have thus proven their faith. They have proven their claim of being believers. For faith is both word and deed, as understood by the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah: a statement of the tongue, a belief in the heart, and actions of the limbs; it increases with obedience and decreases with disobedience. So when the test comes for the believer, regarding his life and wealth, the truthful among them will offer it up and not hesitate. And whoever wishes to test his faith, whether it is sincere or false, should examine it in relation to jihad in the path of Allah. What is the status of jihad in the path of Allah in his own eyes, and what is the status of those who strive in the path of Allah? The believer must consider the status of jihad in the path of Allah within himself. If he is among those who love jihad, who strive in the path of Allah, and who desire to strive in the path of Allah, then, Allah willing, he is among the truthful in his claim of faith. But how can one who lags behind in jihad, or discourages others from it, or whose tongue never tires of speaking ill of those who strive in the path of Allah be truthful, after Allah Almighty has said: "The believers are only those who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then doubt not but strive with their wealth and their lives in the cause of Allah. Those are the ones who will be among the believers. They are the truthful ones." The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, explained to us that whoever does not strive in the way of Allah, nor even consider striving in His cause, has fallen into a branch of hypocrisy. He, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever dies without having fought in the way of Allah, nor even considered it, dies with a branch of hypocrisy." Allah forbid. Why? Because hypocrisy is the opposite of truthfulness, and the truthful person is the opposite of the hypocrite. Therefore, the practical test of the sincerity of faith is striving in the way of Allah with one's wealth and life, and this striving is like striving within oneself. And because we are commanded to be with the truthful, and the most sincere of the believers are those who strive in the way of Allah, therefore, the Almighty has commanded us to be with the truthful. Allah Almighty said, after mentioning His acceptance of the repentance of those who stayed behind from jihad in the way of Allah, that He has forgiven the three who stayed behind: Murar ibn al-Rabi', Hilal ibn Umayya, and Ka'b ibn Malik. When they stayed behind from the Battle of Tabuk, and they did not stay behind from any other battle, except the Battle of Badr, as Ka'b ibn Malik said, and the

Prophet did not rebuke those who stayed behind from the Battle of Badr, because he, peace and blessings be upon him, only went out for the caravan. The point is that Allah Almighty, after mentioning His acceptance of the repentance of those who stayed behind from jihad, commanded us to be with the truthful. Allah Almighty said: “And ˹Allah has also turned in mercy to˺ the three who had remained behind, ˹whose guilt distressed them˺ until the earth, despite its vastness, seemed to close in on them, and their souls were torn in anguish. They knew there was no refuge from Allah except in Him. Then He turned to them in mercy so that they might repent. Surely Allah ˹alone˺ is the Accepter of Repentance, Most Merciful.” (At-Tawbah: 118) The verse in Surah Al-Hujurat clarifies who the truthful ones are: “The ˹true˺ believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger—never doubting—and strive with their wealth and their lives in the cause of Allah. They are the ones true in faith.” We ask Allah, the Magnificent, Lord of the Magnificent Throne, to make us among the truthful in our words, our deeds, and our faith, and to guide us to what He loves and is pleased with. He is the Guardian of that and is Capable of it. And our final supplication is that all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

Lesson Twenty:

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon His chosen servants, and upon His family and companions, and upon those who follow His guidance. We continue our reflections on Surah Al-Hujurat. In this lesson, we will reflect on the words of Allah, the Exalted, and Most High: “They regard their acceptance of Islam as a favor to you. Tell ˹them, O Prophet˺, 'Do not regard your Islam as a favor to me. Rather, it is Allah Who has done you a favor by guiding you to the faith, if ˹indeed˺ you are faithful.” (Al-Hujurat: 17) At-Tabari, may Allah have mercy on him, said: “Allah Almighty says to His Prophet Muhammad: These Bedouins are doing you a favor, O Muhammad, by embracing Islam. (Say, 'Do not regard your Islam as a favor to me. Rather, it is Allah Who has done you a favor by guiding you to the faith.' He says, rather, Allah has bestowed favor upon you, O people, that He has enabled you to believe in Him and His Messenger. (If ˹indeed˺ you are faithful) He says, if you are truthful in your saying, 'We have believed,' then it is Allah who has bestowed favor upon you by guiding you to Him. So do not consider your Islam a favor to me.” End quote. Ibn Kathir, may Allah have mercy on him, said: “Allah Almighty said, ‘They consider it a favor to you that they have embraced Islam,’ meaning the Bedouins who consider their Islam, their following, and their support of the Messenger a favor. Allah Almighty responds to them, ‘Say, “Do not consider your Islam a favor to me.” For the benefit of that only returns to you. Or, Allah has bestowed a favor upon you in it. Rather, Allah has bestowed a favor upon you that He has guided you to faith, if you are truthful in your claim.” End quote. This verse rebukes those who boast of their Islam and obedience to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family). Why? Because they boast of something that is not their own. They have no merit except through the grace of Allah Almighty. He is the One who bestowed upon them the guidance to faith. Therefore, they should not boast of something that Allah Almighty has already granted them. Similarly, a Muslim, if granted guidance and obedience to Allah through any act of worship or devotion, should not boast to Allah about that obedience. For he did not do so except through Allah's grace and assistance. Therefore, if a Muslim is granted the ability to perform any act of obedience, he should not say, "By Allah, I will do such and such." I am doing this, I did that, and I have a role in this obedience and in this struggle, or I have a role in this. It's been a long time; he shouldn't say that, for in doing so he is boasting to whom? To the One who has bestowed favors. He is

obligated to obey Allah Almighty. And since it is Allah who grants success and aids His servant regarding obedience and worship, it is incumbent upon him not to consider himself superior to his fellow Muslims. He boasts over them about something he could not have accomplished were it not for Allah's grace alone. Therefore, he must humble himself and praise Him [Allah] for His favor and blessings upon him, and this occurred during the time of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. One of the Companions was Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas, on the authority of Mus'ab ibn Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, who said: Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas saw that he had an advantage over others. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Are you given victory and sustenance except for your weaknesses?" Al-Nasa’i mentioned an addition to Sa’d’s hadith that clarifies its meaning, saying: “Is it?” You will not be victorious or provided for except through your weak ones, through their fasting, prayers, and supplications. Therefore, if we are granted the ability to obey Allah Almighty, to strive in His cause, to call to Him, to seek Islamic knowledge, or to perform any act of obedience whatsoever, we must not consider ourselves superior to our Muslim brothers. Rather, we should be humble towards them, lower our wings of submission, and invite them to what we have been granted the ability to do. By doing so, Allah willing, we will have shown gratitude for Allah's blessings. Al-Muhallab said: "Allah intended, through this statement of Sa'd, to encourage humility and to remove pride and arrogance from the hearts of the believers." End quote. Whoever is a mujahid or has a long history in knowledge and calling to Allah, and whoever has spent a long time in these acts of obedience, then he should thank Allah for His favor upon him in this, and this should not be a reason for him to feel superior to others because of his precedence and seniority in these acts of obedience. He should not mention this in every gathering as a way of introducing himself and his deeds and showing to those who come after him that they should recognize his merit and give him his due. This means that he should not say with this speech: I did this and I said that, and this happened to me, and I have been in this field for such and such years, to introduce himself and say to the one who comes after him who has come to this hall: Recognize my worth, recognize my merit, and give me my position. This is not appropriate, and such a person should examine himself, and he should fear that his deeds may lack sincerity. He should be careful that his share of those acts of obedience is not just people mentioning him and talking about him and giving him what he wants from their mentioning these acts of obedience in terms of respect and prominence in gatherings only. This means that this is his reward

for these acts of obedience. As for sincerity, which is a condition for the acceptance of good deeds, it has been stripped away from these actions, Allah forbid. And let the words of the Messenger of Allah, "Allah, Allah," always be in our minds and before our eyes, so that we may renew our intentions and purify our hearts. And this is a great hadith, which Abu Hurairah used to narrate, kneeling on his knees because of its greatness. He, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The first person to be judged will be a man who was martyred. He will be brought forth, and Allah will remind him of His favors, and he will acknowledge them. Allah will say: 'What did you do with them?' He will say: 'I fought for Your sake until I was martyred.' Allah will say: 'You have lied. You fought so that it would be said: "So-and-so is brave," and it was said.' Then he will be ordered to be dragged until he is thrown into the Fire. And a man who learned the Qur'an, taught it, and recited it will be brought forth, and Allah will remind him of His favors, and he will acknowledge them. Allah will say: 'What did you do with them?' He will say: 'I learned for Your sake, taught it, and recited the Qur'an for Your sake.' Allah will say: 'You have lied. You learned so that it would be said: "He is a scholar," and it was said. You recited the Qur'an so that it would be said: "He is a reciter," and it was said.' Then he will be ordered to be dragged on his face until he is thrown into the Fire. And a man whom Allah enriched and gave various kinds of wealth will be brought forth, and Allah will remind him of His favors, and he will acknowledge them." He said: What did you do with it? He said: I did not leave any way that you love to spend on except that I spent on it. He said: You lied, but you did it so that it would be said that he is generous, and it was said. Then he was ordered to be dragged on his face until he was thrown into the Fire, Allah forbid. This means that these are the most important deeds in Islam after faith in Allah Almighty. However, when hypocrisy and the desire for recognition enter a person's heart, these noble deeds will have no effect on their reward. Also, on the authority of Abu Musa, he said: A man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and said: "A man fights for spoils, another fights to be remembered, and another fights to show his position. So who is fighting in the way of Allah?" He said: "Whoever fights so that the word of Allah is supreme is in the path of Allah." And someone might say, "Yes, I love remembrance, but I want the word of Allah to be supreme." No, it is necessary that your first intention be that the word of Allah be supreme. As for remembrance, whether you remember or not, whether your place is seen or not, whether you take spoils or not, as long as you want the word of Allah to be

supreme, then you are in the path of Allah. And with this intention, you have dedicated your work to Allah Almighty, and it is hoped that He will accept your work. And we have seen, by Allah, some brothers and sheikhs who have a long history in jihad and support, knowledge, calling to Islam, giving, and generosity, and this is not known about them unless someone who knew them before tells us about them. Otherwise, you find them sitting in the gathering as if they came yesterday, even though they have been there for many years, and in their gatherings, they are like someone who came yesterday. This is from their humility. And when the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, entered a gathering, he would sit where the council ended with him, and he did not like anyone to stand up from his seat so that he could sit. He disliked that. He disliked praise to his face, and he was the Messenger of Allah, and he was the most deserving of praise. He was the one who was the cause of people's guidance. He was the one sent as a mercy to people. Yet he disliked being given precedence by people. And that is how the Messenger of Allah is. And those who are not known except that someone knows him or that he speaks about himself in that for the sake of benefit, or to update on the blessings of Allah Almighty upon him, or the occasion arises for that, so he speaks only for that occasion. But despite that, we saw that they disliked being given precedence, and people exaggerating in their respect and giving them precedence and appreciation. But he liked to be like the common people. These are the companions of the Messenger of Allah. When a man is praised to his face and he denies it, he says, “I am only a man from among the Muslims.” We have seen the opposite of that. Some people come and have been in this work for a year or two, in any work in advocacy, jihad, knowledge, or any act of obedience, and you find them sitting around saying, “We were, we did, we became one of us, and so on...” just so that people know who they are! Then one day, for example, they feel that people are not giving them what they want, so they come and say, “We are, we are, we are.” No, that is not appropriate. A person should hide their work, and if it appears or they reveal it, it should be for the same purpose: to make the word of Allah supreme, to make Islam prevail among people, to make the Islamic call prevail in all societies. This is the purpose of updating it with what they have done in terms of obedience. We ask Allah, the Almighty, Lord of the Mighty Throne, to purify our intentions, rectify our hearts, and make us among the people of Allah and those who are obedient, who do not seek recognition or to be praised for it. We ask Allah, the Almighty, to make our deeds purely for His sake, to benefit us with what He has

taught us, and to grant us success in acting upon it. He is indeed capable of all things and worthy of answering our prayers. Our final supplication is that all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. With this, we conclude our reflections on Surahs An-Nur and Al-Hujurat. We ask Allah to make what we have said beneficial. All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and may peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, and all his companions.

and All praise be to Allah - Abou Baraq (ZAN)